

A monk in a brown robe is seen from behind, looking out over a body of water towards a large, bright full moon in a cloudy sky. The scene is serene and contemplative.

A Journey of Self-Discovery

Bhikkhu Revata

A Journey of Self-Discovery

The Buddha never compelled anybody to have
blind faith in Him. He just exhorted us to depend on
our own wisdom.

It is not because we are born as humans that we
become wise or foolish. It is because we can bring our
defilements under control that we become wise, and it
is because we can't bring our defilements under control
that we become foolish.

We all have both good and bad qualities.
Snakes, chickens, and pigs are not created for you to eat.
It is in such existences that you yourself have
been born before.

We can't harm anybody without harming ourselves. We
can't disturb others without disturbing ourselves.

Patience means accepting. Very beautiful! Accepting
both the desirable and the undesirable is
the perfection of patience.

You make friends with the defilements all the time, but
the defilements never treat you as a friend in return.
They treat you as an enemy.

The Buddha never says, 'Come and believe'. He says,
'Come and see; the wise can know, the wise can see.'
'One who sees the Dhamma, sees me. One who sees me,
sees the Dhamma.'



新加坡帕奥禅修中心
Pa-Auk Meditation Centre (Singapore)
15 Teo Kim Eng Road Singapore 416385
Email: admin@pamc.org.sg
Website: www.pamc.org.sg

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Bhikkhu Revata

*Nāmo tassa bhagavāto arahato
sammā sambuddhassa*

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Published by
Pa-Auk Meditation Centre, Singapore
Tel./Fax: 65 66119242
Email: admin@pamc.org.sg

*This book has been published
for Free Distribution Only and Not for Sale.*

The material in this book may be reproduced
for
Free Distribution
without the author's permission.

It is recommended, however, that
unauthorised changes and other misrepresentation
of the author's teachings
be avoided.

Published: November 2015

*Dedicated to all the Sangha
who have sustained the
original teachings of the Buddha
and kept them unadulterated
over the centuries.*

SABBADĀNAM DHAMMADĀNAM JINĀTI
The gift of truth excels all other gifts.

A G I F T - N O T F O R S A L E

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
INTRODUCTION	iii

A Journey of Self-Discovery

Differences in Points of View	1
How to Fulfil Pāramī in Daily Life	23
A Journey of Self-Discovery	55
The Highest Art	107
For Those Who Want to See the Buddha	143
Aspirations and Sharing of Merits	177
Abbreviations	179
Index	181
Buddhavandanā	197

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude first of all to my preceptor, the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, and all the Saṅgha who have sustained the original teachings of the Buddha and kept them unadulterated over the centuries.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge Venerable Ñāṇukkāṃsa and a group of young Buddhists from Singapore, who generously offered to transcribe the recorded Dhamma talks. Venerable Ñāṇukkāṃsa also helped to compile the transcribed material so it could be edited for this publication.

I would also like to acknowledge Brother Dave, Sister Cheng, and Brother JJ. Each of them was instrumental in the making of this book.

Special acknowledgement is due to Brother Dave. Without his efforts this book could not have come into being.

I would like to thank them all for their efforts.

Bhikkhu Revata

Pa-Auk Anghong, Thailand

(30th September 2015)

INTRODUCTION

From the time we first open our eyes soon after our birth until we close them for the last time at death, our eyes see many things. Much of our knowledge comes to us from what we see. In the course of a lifetime, we come to know and see many different things. Consider how many things you have seen just today since you opened your eyes on waking up, and how many more things you'll have seen by the time you close your eyes when you go to sleep tonight. In the course of this one day, you will have known and seen many things.

What is it we see? We see pleasant and unpleasant things, things we like and things we don't like, things we decide to pursue and things we try our best to avoid. We act this way because we know from experience how to manipulate our circumstances to our own greatest advantage and least possible disadvantage. This is what constitutes our knowledge. We regard our resulting intentions as correct and honourable. We are justified in thinking this way because this is how we see everyone else acting around us, and to a certain extent it works.

Sooner or later, however, we find ourselves in circumstances that force us to be honest. We may be parted from what is very dear to us, or we may have no choice but to endure what is very distressing. Even short of anguish or disaster, we may eventually realise that our relentless pursuit of pleasure doesn't really result in any deep or lasting happiness. It doesn't even satisfy us, let alone make us happy. We

Introduction

begin to wake up to the fact that our lives are characterised by suffering, both subtle and severe. We are then at a loss.

Like our pursuit of pleasure, our confusion here is justified. We insist that we see and we know – we see how life works, we know how to achieve happiness, so why aren't we successful in our efforts? The reason is very simple yet very, very profound: We think we see and we know, but we don't really see and we don't really know. Moreover, because we don't see, we don't know; and because we don't know, we don't see. Our supposed knowledge gives way to confusion. We are at a loss. We could use someone to show us the way out of our predicament.

If this is where you find yourself, dear reader, take heart and rejoice, because in the book you're holding in your hands you will encounter just such a guide, someone who can show you the way out. The guide you will meet is none other than the Lord Buddha, and the way out He will show you is the Dhamma, His Teachings. He will teach you how to see correctly, and even where to look, so that you yourself can arrive at true knowledge and leave behind an incorrect and mistaken way of seeing and an incomplete and false knowledge. In this way you can eliminate your dissatisfaction and sufferings one by one until you finally arrive at a tranquillity and a bliss that surpass any you have experienced before now. You will know the truth of the way things are. You will see the Dhamma, and thus the Buddha, for yourself.

Introduction

Certain aspects of the Dhamma recur throughout the talks presented here. One of these is the necessity of purifying one's speech and action through the observance of the precepts. Another is the indispensability of unremitting mindfulness. Two other aspects that are often mentioned are the principle of cause and effect and the law of kamma. However, each talk emphasises further aspects of the Teaching in a particular way.

In 'Differences in Points of View' the centrality of the law of kamma in the teachings of the Buddha is recognised. The Noble Eightfold Path is summarised as the three trainings of moral behaviour, concentration, and wisdom. The Path is explained as a path of purification, and the three trainings are related to the purification of the three modes of action of body, speech, and mind. The emphasis throughout this talk is on adopting a point of view that accords with the way things truly are. In other words, the talk teaches us how to see correctly, or right seeing, or Right View.

When we begin to shed our wrong views and actions, we take up right ways of thinking and acting in their stead. 'How to Fulfil Pāramī in Daily Life' explains the beautiful teaching of the ten perfections or virtues that we need to practise if we want to realise the Four Noble Truths and make an end of suffering just as the Buddha did. This talk explains how the ten perfections strengthen and support one another.

The movement away from what is unbeneficial and unskillful to what is beneficial and skillful is further developed in 'A Journey of Self-Discovery'. Here the

Introduction

emphasis is on the mind and its habitual tendencies, on the universal characteristic of non-self, and on the value of contentment as opposed to our extraneous involvements in doing things we don't need to do.

In 'The Highest Art' contentment is elaborated as the art of acceptance. Like the previous talk, this one explains the Buddha's injunction to become skillful in the habits of one's own mind. The non-self nature of the defilements is discussed at length, as is the manner in which the defilements are the reflexive habits of our minds. The talk exhorts us to seek liberation from the endless wheel of saṃsāra and begin a journey that has Nibbāna for its end.

The final talk, 'For Those Who Want to See the Buddha', further develops the path of purification in ways that were introduced in the two preceding talks. In short, the focus of this talk is a simple yet comprehensive explanation of the path of meditation practice, which is the cultivation of concentration based on morality and culminating in wisdom. Insight meditation is described in some detail. The purpose of our meditation practice is clear: Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge. The goal is Nibbāna.

This is what you can hope to know and see for yourself if these teachings find a place in your heart and you practise them diligently and wisely. Your sufferings will fall away one by one, and your confusion will dissipate. True knowledge will replace your lack of knowledge, and tranquillity and bliss will increase with each step along the Path. Instead of the inces-

Introduction

sant oscillation between your likes and dislikes, happiness and sadness, wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain, you will go from bliss to bliss until you reach the sure and unassailable refuge of complete liberation from the wheel of saṃsāra. You will see things you've never seen before, and know things you've never known before. Of its own accord the light of the Dhamma will illuminate your heart and expel the darkness of delusion and craving and defilement, and you will see all things both within and without in the light of the Dhamma. You will know and see the Buddha and the Dhamma everywhere and at all times. You will see the Buddha, by knowing and seeing the Dhamma. You will see Nibbāna.

May you receive much benefit from the teachings in this book!

May you practise according to the teachings of the Buddha, and may the light of the Dhamma be your guiding light always!

May you see the Buddha and the Dhamma and realise Nibbāna in this very life!

Much Mettā,

Bhikkhu Revata

Pa-Auk Anghong, Thailand

(27th September 2015)

BASED ON THE TALK

Differences in Points of View

The name of the talk that I will give tonight is ‘Differences in Points of View’. We all know that different people have different points of view because of their culture, the environment in which they grew up, their education, and their beliefs. This is normal for all of us. How about all of you? Do you all share the same point of view on every topic? For sure, you have different points of view. Our points of view in worldly matters are different. What is true in a country like America and what people generally practise there may be quite different from what one finds in Indonesia because of differences in culture and education and so forth. But even though the worldly points of view are different, the Dhamma point of view should be the same.

Dhamma...what is Dhamma? Dhamma is the teaching of the Buddha. In other words, Dhamma is the truth. Dhamma and the teaching of the Buddha are the same because the Buddha teaches the Dhamma, which is the truth. For that reason I have told all of you that, as regards the Dhamma point of view, the point of view should be the same. As I have told all of you, something may be true in one country but

Differences in Points of View

not so in another. Something that you all generally practise in Indonesia will not necessarily be the accepted norm in other countries. What is the reason? They are not practising the truth; they are practising what they generally hold to be true in their environment. That is why, if you want to live peacefully, you should understand the truth which is true at all times, everywhere, and for everyone. The truth discovered by the Buddha, the truth penetrated and taught by the Buddha, is always true. It is timeless. It is not an egocentric point of view; rather, it is what we understand from the point of view of the truth.

People belong to various religions, and all such people regard the teachings of their own religion as true. We Buddhist monks also say that the teaching of the Buddha is true. So who is right? This is something you all need to consider. For that reason, I choose to give this talk tonight.

Actually there are many religions in the world, what are called 'isms', but actually the teaching of the Buddha is not an 'ism', even though we call it 'Buddhism'. Buddhism is not a religion. If you examine what defines a religion, you find that it is all about a system of belief, a system of worship, and a system of prayer. This is what is called a religion. What people understand as a religion is a system of belief and worship and prayer. The teaching of the Buddha is not a system of belief, or of worship, or of prayer. The Buddha taught a way to seek and realise the truth.

As the Buddha said to the Kālāmas:

It is fitting for you to be perplexed, O Kālāmas, it is fitting for you to be in doubt. Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter.... But when you know for yourselves, ‘These things are unwholesome...’, then you should abandon them.... But when you know for yourselves, ‘These things are wholesome...’, then you should engage in them.¹

The Buddha advised us not to have blind faith.

Buddhist people also make aspirations. As you all know, our bodhisatta himself made an aspiration to be a Buddha. What do you think? Is it just because he made an aspiration to be a Buddha that he became a Buddha? No. Instead, because he made great effort and practised hard to fulfil the *pāramī*, the perfections, only then did he become a Buddha. You all know it is not just by making an aspiration that he became a Buddha. When we make an aspiration, it is like choosing a destination. To reach the destination, we must make an effort to head towards it. If we make an aspiration and then fail to do what we should do, can we be said to be acting according to our aspiration? Thus you may also make an aspiration in your life; but after you do so, take heed to do all the things you need to do, because only then can you fulfil your aspiration.

¹ AN.III.22.5 Kesamuttisuttam, or Kālāmasuttam (AN 3.65 The Discourse Concerning the Kesaputtīyā, or the Discourse Concerning the Kālāmas, also known as the Kālāma Sutta).

The central teaching of the Buddha is the law of kamma. What makes someone a Buddhist? Are you a Buddhist? Buddhists are those who have faith in kamma and its results. Do you have faith in kamma and its results? But the Buddha doesn't want all of you just to believe blindly. This is something one can realise for oneself. As I am talking about differences in point of view, some religions teach that water creatures and land creatures are created for you to eat. This is what we see in other people's faith. In this regard such people have a completely different point of view from ours. The Buddha said, 'Good begets good, bad begets bad.'² Do you believe this?

² See MN.I.1.4 Bhayabheravasuttam (MN 4 The Discourse on Fear and Dread):

So dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passāmi cavamāne upapajjamāne hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbhaṇṇe sugate duggate yathākammūpage satte pajānāmi – ime vata bhonto sattā kāyaduccaritena samannāgatā vacāduccaritena samannāgatā manoduccaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ upavādakā micchādīṭṭhikā micchādīṭṭhikamma-samādānā; te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nīrayaṃ upapannā. ime vā pana bhonto sattā kāyasucaritena samannāgatā vacāsucaritena samannāgatā manosucaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ anupavādakā sammādīṭṭhikā sammādīṭṭhikammasamādānā; te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggāṃ lokaṃ upapannā'ti.

With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. I understood how beings pass on according to their actions thus: 'These worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell; but those worthy beings who were

Are you sure? Is your conviction unshakeable? Not yet unshakeable; still shakeable. The Buddha does not compel people to have blind faith in Him. He was enlightened, and He has given us the means to become enlightened just as He was. Unshakeable faith is developed in someone who sees the Four Noble Truths. What are the Four Noble Truths? They are suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

When did your suffering start? At the initial state in this life, in your mother's womb, your suffering started. All of you, myself as well – our suffering started in our mother's womb. In Pāḷi, the Buddha said, '*Samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*' – 'In brief, the five clinging aggregates are suffering'.³ For us human beings, these five aggregates, comprising *nāma* and *rūpa*, mentality and materiality, arise at the beginning of this life in our mothers' wombs. Do you know how many *rūpa* arise? For *rūpa*, only three types of particle (*kalāpa*) arise: body decade *kalāpa*,⁴ sex decade *kalāpa*,⁵ and heart decade *kalāpa*.⁶ Three

well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not revilers of Noble Ones, right in their views, giving effect to Right View in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.'

³ SN.V.12.2.1 Dhammacakkappavattanasuttaṃ (SN 56.11 The Discourse on Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma).

⁴ A *kalāpa* (cluster) which comprises ten *rūpa* (ultimate materiality), with body sensitivity being the tenth.

⁵ A *kalāpa* which comprises ten *rūpa* (ultimate materiality), with male/female sex-materiality being the tenth.

types of particle start at the beginning of this life in the mother's womb.⁷

A scientist will know the gender of a foetus only after a few months of its development. Only after those first several weeks can a doctor determine whether the foetus is female or male. But according to the Buddha's teaching, it is possible to know whether the foetus is female or male at the earliest beginning of its life in its mother's womb. The gender is determined by the presence of a female or male sex decade kalāpa. Do you think it is possible to know so soon and in this way? I hear some say no, some say they're not sure. Here I see different points of view among Buddhist people. I can accept that. Those who don't know by direct experience differ in their point of view even though they are all Buddhists. I want all of you to have the same point of view in regard to the Dhamma. This is my wish, not trying to convince all of you. I can't compel all of you to have the same point of view. Only when you know and see these things by practical experience will you develop the same point of view.

Just as materiality occurs for humans at the beginning state in the mother's womb, so also mentality arises. For some, the different types of mentality may number thirty-four altogether, for others there may be thirty-three, and for others still there may be thirty-two. Now I will let you know who among my

⁶ A kalāpa which comprises ten rūpa (ultimate materiality), with heart-materiality being the tenth.

⁷ Vsm.II.20 Rūpanibbattipassanākārahathā; Path of Purification 2.20 Comprehension of Materiality.

listeners was born accompanied by *pīti* (joy) and who was born not accompanied by *pīti*. You will notice that some people rarely smile. Their face is always serious; they find it difficult to smile. Such people were like this in their mother's womb, at the beginning of this life, and were born without *pīti*. But we also see some people whose face is smiling almost all the time. This is because, at the beginning of this life, their mentality arose associated with *pīti*. For some people, mentality arises associated with *paññā*, wisdom; some develop in the womb without wisdom. So if someone was born with wisdom and *pīti*, the mentalities will total thirty-four. If someone was born with wisdom and without *pīti*, the mentalities will total thirty-three. For those without wisdom but with *pīti*, the total number is also thirty-three. Some are born without wisdom and without *pīti*, so the total would be thirty-two. Do you think it is possible to penetrate such profound Dhamma? Really, we are not sure. But we are unsure simply because we have no direct knowledge. Those who are born without wisdom can't realise the Dhamma in this very life. So how can we know whether we were born with or without wisdom? The only sure way to know is by practising meditation. When you attain absorption concentration (*jhāna*), you can then be sure that you have been born with wisdom. Based on concentration, if you continue to practise meditation, you may be able to attain Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge. When you attain those, you will remove all doubt. So you develop unshakeable faith. Only when you know and see ultimate materiality and mentality, you know the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering. If our suffering in this very

Differences in Points of View

life began in our mother's womb, where might we find the cause of suffering? Where will the cause of suffering, the Second Noble Truth, arise? If suffering begins in the mother's womb in this very life, the cause of that suffering will have to be in the previous life. To understand the Second Noble Truth, the origin of suffering or the cause of suffering, we teach practitioners to see the causes of this very life by discerning their past lives. I want all of you to realise these truths directly. What was the kamma that appeared at the near-death moment in the previous life? This you can penetrate for yourself.

I will share the experience that one meditator had in her practice. After realising ultimate mentality and materiality, she was taught to discern the past in order to know the cause of suffering, the Second Noble Truth. Now, among my listeners here some are women, some are men. Why were we born as men? Why were you born as women? Those who have faith in another teaching may say that their God creates people as male and female. So this is a different point of view; this is because of the teaching they have received. Now I will share the practice of that lady. After she had known and seen ultimate mentality and materiality, she was instructed to discern the past, to know and to see the Second Noble Truth. So before talking about her past life, I need to tell all of you that in this life she is an educated city woman. When she discerned her past life to understand the Second Noble Truth, what did she see? At the near-death moment, one object appeared in her mind. It was an offering of fruits to a monk. Is this a wholesome or an unwholesome action? It is wholesome. So then she was instructed to discern what

her aspiration was at the time of that offering. So when she discerned mindfully, she came to know that in that past life she was a poor, uneducated village woman. At the time of her offering, she saw, very close by, an educated city woman. As you know, when someone who is poor sees someone else who is very rich, what do they want to be? They want to be rich, too. In the same way, as she was a poor, uneducated village woman, she disliked her existence. So when she offered fruits to the bhikkhu, she made an aspiration: ‘Because of this wholesome kamma, may I be reborn as an educated city woman’. So after taking rebirth in this life, she became an educated city woman. So this is what you all can directly know and see by systematically practising meditation. As the Buddha said, ‘Come and see’.⁸ The Buddha didn’t say, ‘Come and believe’. The Buddha said, ‘Come and see’. The wise can know, the wise can see.

So now that meditator understands kamma and its results. She understands well that good kamma yields good results. Before, she was just listening to the teaching of the Buddha, but now her understanding has changed.

I will share a story about another meditator’s practice. I will jump to one of his past lives. We were teaching the meditators to discern at least four or five past lives. I don’t remember exactly in which of

⁸ See DN.II.5 Janavasabhasuttaṃ (DN 18.27 The Discourse Concerning Janavasabha), among others: *Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko **ehi**passiko opaneyyiko paccattaṃ veditaḅbo viññūhi.*

his past lives, but in one particular life he was a very rich man. He also did meritorious deeds such as making offerings, but not to virtuous ones, just to poor people. He had sons and daughters. He loved his sons and daughters. When he was about to die, what did his sons and daughters do? They started quarrelling about their inheritance. What happened to their father? They were not actually arguing in his presence, but they were quarrelling about their inheritance while their father was about to die. So when he heard that his sons and daughters were quarrelling, strong anger arose in his mind, and unfortunately this was his near-death moment. At the near-death moment, he was angry. Was that wholesome or unwholesome? Yes, it is unwholesome and very dangerous. So in his next life he was born as a snake. Bad kamma gives bad results. Snakes, chickens, and pigs are not created for you to eat. It is in such existences that you yourself have been born before.⁹ In this regard the Buddha said that the beginning of the round of rebirths is unknown and unknowable¹⁰ and the Buddha also said there is no

⁹ SN.II.4.2.3 *Tiṃsamattasuttaṃ* (SN 15.13 The Discourse Concerning Thirty Bhikkhus): ‘*Dīgharattaṃ vo, bhikkhave, gunmaṃ sataṃ gobhūtānaṃ ... mahiṃsānaṃ sataṃ mahiṃsabhūtānaṃ ... urabbhānaṃ sataṃ urabbhabhūtānaṃ ... ajānaṃ sataṃ ajabhūtānaṃ ... miḡānaṃ sataṃ miḡabhūtānaṃ ... kukkuṭānaṃ sataṃ kukkuṭabhūtānaṃ ... sūkarānaṃ sataṃ sūkarabhūtānaṃ ... sīsacchinnānaṃ lohitāṃ passanaṃ paḡgharitaṃ, na tveva catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakaṃ*’ – ‘For a long time, bhikkhus, you have been cows, and when as cows... buffalo...sheep...goats...deer...chickens...pigs...you were be-headed, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans’.

¹⁰ SN.III.1.10.7 *Gaddulabaddhasuttaṃ* (SN 22.99 The Discourse on the Leash-Bound); also in SN.II.4.1.9 *Daṇḍasuttaṃ* (SN 15.9 The Discourse on the Stick): ‘*Anamataggoyaṃ, bhik-*

Differences in Points of View

form of existence whatsoever in which we ourselves have not existed in the past. We have been born in every form of existence before, high and low. That is why, if you penetrate in this way, you will have faith in kamma and its results, not because of what someone else says, but because of your own direct knowledge. At that time, your own point of view will accord with the truth; your view will accord with the Dhamma. Because you know suffering, the First Noble Truth, and because you know the origin of suffering, the Second Noble Truth, you will become a true Buddhist.

Our Buddha is a very great teacher who never compelled anyone to have blind faith in Him. He just exhorted us to depend on our own wisdom. ‘When you know for yourselves’, He told the Kālāmas. How great He is! He gave us the ability to depend on our own wisdom. Don’t you want to know and see? Of course! So I want to share with all of you this teaching on differences in points of view among Buddhists. I don’t want to talk much about such differences in other religions.

You do wholesome deeds such as offerings. You offer food, you offer candles, you offer slippers. Why do you offer these things? Yes, to accumulate good kamma, to receive good results in the future. In this regard the Buddha said that beings are the owners of their actions, the heirs of their actions. They origi-

khava, saṃsāro. pubbā koṭi na paññāyati aviññānāvarenaṇaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsarataṃ – ‘Bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving’.

nate from their actions. Actions are their relatives. They have their actions as their refuge.¹¹ Understanding that they are heirs of their actions, Buddhists accumulate wholesome deeds like making offerings. Those who make offerings also have expectations – for instance, that their act of giving will yield its result in the form of wealth. Whether you expect the result or whether you don't, it will give its result when the time is ripe. Those who understand kamma on this level think to themselves, 'By accumulating wholesome deeds such as giving, I will be a rich man some day in the future.' Some make an offering with this expectation. This is also their point of view. But there is another point of view which is superior, that is, to make an offering without expecting prosperity. Wealth and prosperity are the direct result of giving, but you don't need to expect such results. So when you make an offering, it is better if you just make an aspiration like the following: 'May this act of giving be the cause of the realisation of Nibbāna'. Or you could make this aspiration: 'May this wholesome deed be for my realisation of Nibbāna'. If you do so, your offering will be a supporting cause for your realisation of Nibbāna. But before you realise Nibbāna, while you wander in the round of rebirths along the way, giving will yield results such as wealth. But if you just

¹¹ AN.X.1.5.8 Pabbajitābhiṅhasuttaṃ (AN 10.48 The Discourse on the Frequent Recollections of a Renunciate): *'Kammassakomhi kamnadāyādo kammayoni kammabandhu kammaṭṭisarāṇo, yaṃ kammaṃ kairissāmi kalyānaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā tassa dāyādo bhvissāmi'ti'* – 'I am the owner of my kamma, the heir of my kamma; I have kamma as my origin, kamma as my relative, kamma as my resort; I will be the heir of whatever kamma, good or bad, that I do'.

make an aspiration by saying, ‘May this merit be for the achievement of prosperity’, it will not be for the realisation of Nibbāna. So you should change your way of thinking, your point of view, and you should not make an aspiration just for prosperity. Instead you should make an aspiration for the realisation of Nibbāna.

The direct cause for the realisation of Nibbāna is not offering; it is the meditation practice. In the same way, when you undertake to observe the five, or eight, or ten precepts, taking the precepts yields results like being born in a good realm. But when you take the precepts, instead of making an aspiration to be reborn in a good realm, you should just make an aspiration by saying, ‘May this merit of practising morality be for the realisation of Nibbāna’. Then it will support you in your efforts to realise Nibbāna. But if you don’t make an aspiration of this sort, you may still be reborn in a good realm, but your rebirth there will not be a support for the realisation of Nibbāna. If even devout Buddhists were to make an aspiration while their mind inclines to be something or get something, the results of their meritorious deeds would not help them toward Nibbāna. But if you make an aspiration to realise Nibbāna when you make an offering, you will wander as a rich man along the way in the round of rebirths until you realise Nibbāna, yet you will be able to give up the things you possess because of that very aspiration for the realisation of Nibbāna.

You may notice that some people are very rich, and that among the rich there are some who are not able to give up what they have, while there are others

who *are* able to give up what they have. What is the reason? It is because of a difference of aspiration, of intention, which stems from a difference in their points of view. Who will be happier, those who can give up or those who can't? Whose mind will be more mature, the minds of those who can give up or of those who can't? So we all should change our point of view, because only then can we improve our lives, one existence after another, until we are able to realise Nibbāna. Who can realise Nibbāna? Yes, you yourself must try. What I mean is, those who can realise Nibbāna are those who can give up their attachment to living things and non-living things. Realising Nibbāna comes after removing the defilements step by step. If you cling to the things you have, and so can't give them up, how can you remove your defilements? So along the way to realising Nibbāna, we all need to fulfil ten pāramī. One of the ten pāramī is *nekkhamma-pāramī*, the perfection of renunciation. Do you understand the meaning of the perfection of renunciation, *nekkhamma-pāramī*? There are two things we need to give up; one is our attachment to external possessions and the other, our inner defilements. So if we want to fulfil the perfection of renunciation, first of all we need to give up the material things we possess. Only if we can give up what we possess can we engage in practising meditation so as to be able to give up our defilements. If the first type of renunciation is lacking, the second will not follow. As you all know, our bodhisatta, in many of his past lives, was very, very rich; yet he could give up all he had, and after that he could even renounce the world completely. Giving up things means making offerings to those in need.

Differences in Points of View

Because of such giving, in many of his existences he became a rich man again. Let me ask you one question: Do people become rich because of *lobha* (greed) or because of *alobha* (non-greed)? Yes, today you are introduced to a new point of view. Before now, you may have thought that people become rich by means of *lobha*. No; through *lobha* you will become a being that suffers. Very practical, on the spot – if you are greedy you will suffer. Very practical, on the spot – if you can give up someone or something, you will feel very happy, you will feel great yourself. Giving up or developing non-greed is the way to success. Giving up what we possess, or developing non-greed, is the way to live peacefully. The more we give up, the more we have. The more we have, the more we give up again, because we have the capability to do so; but you must know your limit.

So now I will share with all of you the knowledge of how you can improve your point of view. Thus far I have shared with all of you the realisations that two meditators gained through the knowledge of their past lives.

To be able to realise Nibbāna, the direct cause that we must develop is the practice of meditation. You know what the Four Noble Truths are. The Fourth Noble Truth is the way leading to Nibbāna. What is the way leading to Nibbāna? The Noble Eightfold Path. We can summarise the Noble Eightfold Path as the three trainings. What are the three trainings? *Sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* – morality, concentration, and wisdom. I want to know whether you have the same point of view regarding these three trainings. Do you know the purpose of practising the training

of morality (*sīla*)? You are all Buddhists, so you know the way that leads to Nibbāna: *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. I want all of you to know the actual purpose of practising the training of morality. Even when I ask this question in our country, which, as all of you know, is a country where the Buddha's teaching is flourishing, whether I ask it of lay people or of some who are ordained, they can't give me the correct answer. If we don't know the purpose of each training, we can't know, we can't see, we can't understand the essence of these three trainings. So the purpose of practising the training of morality is to purify two actions – bodily actions and verbal actions. How many actions do we commit in a day? Yesterday night in my Dhamma talk I asked my listeners this question, and they gave the same answer as you have just now – they said that our actions are countless in number. Do you agree? I also agree with all of you, but all these countless actions can be categorised as just three actions. Even though you might say that you have done, you do, and you are going to do countless actions, they all come down to just three actions: bodily action, verbal action, and mental action.

Bodily and verbal actions come after mental action. If it is so, which action is the leading one? Mental action. So the mind is the leader. Suppose you practise morality by observing the five precepts; you therefore refrain from killing. What type of action is killing? Is it bodily or verbal action? Bodily action. What sort of action is refraining from stealing? It should be classed as bodily action. Refraining from sexual misconduct? Bodily action. Refraining from telling lies? Verbal action. What about refraining

from taking intoxicants? According to the commentary it is bodily action. More importantly it is just the basis of negligence. Taking intoxicants makes people drunk, sometimes very drunk, and then they are capable of killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, and lying. That is why it is the cause of negligence. So now you can see that there are only two actions that we can purify by observing precepts.

I will invite you to reflect as follows. When you practise the five precepts, you refrain from killing. Even though you refrain from killing, you feel pain when a mosquito bites you, so you may want to kill the mosquito. The desire to kill may still arise in your mind, but you remember that you are observing the precept to refrain from taking life. So you don't physically kill, but a mental wrong action has arisen.

What about stealing? You refrain from actually stealing, but the desire to steal may still arise. You refrain from committing sexual misconduct, but the desire to do so may arise. If you don't transgress the precept in action, you don't break it. The more we practise the training of morality, the more we come to know that our bodily and verbal action is purer and purer. The more you know that your verbal and bodily action has become purer, the more you know that your mental action has not been purified yet. Which is the most impure among the three actions in our daily life – our bodily, verbal, or mental action?

Those who are physically attractive, if it is possible, might want a video taken of their physical appear-

ance, to make a record of their attractiveness. If it were possible to make a similar video of your mind, would you show it to others? For sure, nobody would dare to publicise such a thing. I want all of you to be honest. So now I have shared with all of you the purpose of practising the training of morality: that it is just for the purification of two actions among three, namely, bodily and verbal action. So the more we practise morality, the more we come to know that our mental action is not yet pure.

Which purity is real purity – bodily, verbal, or mental? If your mind is completely pure, there will be no bodily or verbal wrong action. Because of this reason, the wise, who want to purify the mind completely, will not be satisfied with practising just the first training. Because they see the impurity of the mind while practising morality, they are not satisfied with it. For that reason, for those who want to attain purity of mind, the Buddha taught the second training, the training of concentration.

How many samatha concentration objects were taught by the Buddha? Forty types of samatha objects. Among these forty, thirty types can be used to attain jhāna absorption concentration. The remaining ten can be used to attain only as far as access concentration. So we can say there are forty types of concentration (according to the object used) or two types of concentration (according to which level of concentration can be reached). If you practise one of them, such as mindfulness of breathing meditation, you can attain first jhāna, second jhāna, third jhāna, and fourth jhāna absorption concentration. When you attain jhāna absorption concentration, if you

can enter and remain for one hour, your mind is pure for one hour; if you can enter absorption concentration and remain there for two hours, your mind is pure for two hours. Some meditators are successfully practising now; don't you want to practise? But even though your mind is pure when you enter absorption concentration for one, two, or three hours, that purity is not permanent; it is only temporary. If you emerge from your jhāna absorption concentration and then look at this or that unwisely, negatively, and with an unwholesome state of mind, then impure mind will arise again. The wise, being those who are on the way to achieve liberation, want to purify the mind completely, not just temporarily; that is why they are not satisfied with just the first two trainings. For that reason, for those who want to develop purity of mind by removing the defilements step by step completely and without remainder, the Buddha taught the third training, the training of insight.

Only when you practise the training of insight meditation step by step systematically will Path Knowledge arise when insight knowledge is mature. When you attain the first Path Knowledge, it removes self-identity view, doubt, and attachment to wrong practices¹². At that time, you develop un-

¹² *Sīlabbata-parāmāsa* is the attachment driven by the wrong view that certain practices are necessary and sufficient for the attainment of purification. In ancient times, there were many ascetics and heretics who adopted the mode of practice of mimicking the habitual behaviours of dogs and cows, misguided by the wrong view that these practices would lead to purification. Nowadays, there are many seemingly Buddhist practices that are not true to the original teaching of the Buddha,

shakeable faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, past life, present life, future life, and kamma and its results. Path Knowledge arises with the realisation of the Four Noble Truths. I have told all of you the purpose of practising the second training; the purpose of the training of concentration is to purify the mind temporarily. There is still another purpose of practising the training of concentration, as the Buddha said: ‘Bhikkhus, develop concentration. One who is concentrated knows and sees things as they really are’.¹³ In other words, one who is concentrated knows and sees the Four Noble Truths as they really are. So to know and to see the Four Noble Truths, we need to develop concentration. Only when we know and see the Four Noble Truths, Path Knowledge will arise. Only when Path Knowledge arises will the mind be permanently purified of the corresponding defilements.

Among all of you, before now, those who are Buddhist had differences in your point of view even about the training of morality. I believe all of you have understood the purpose of practising the first training, so that now your point of view has become

which specifies that the Noble Eightfold Path in its entirety is the only practice that leads to purification. These pseudo-Buddhist practices can be considered as wrong practices (*sīlabata*). With the realisation of the first Path Knowledge, the Stream-Enterer knows with absolute certainty that no other practices outside of the Noble Eightfold Path lead to purification. Hence he has removed permanently and without remainder any attachment to wrong practices.

¹³ SN.V.12.1.1 Samādhisuttaṃ (SN 56.1 The Discourse on Concentration, also known as the Samādhi Sutta): ‘*Samādhim, bhikkhave, bhāvētha. Samāhito, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*’.

Differences in Points of View

the same. Before, you may or may not have known the purpose of practising the second training, namely, concentration; now you know it is to purify the mind temporarily and to know and to see the Truths. Now you have developed the same point of view in relation to the second training, the training of concentration. So too with regard to the third training, whose purpose is to remove the defilements permanently without remainder or to make the mind completely pure step by step – your point of view has also become the same. But this sameness is not yet unshakeable. Why? You now are developing sameness of point of view through hearing. You need to improve one step more, to realise these three trainings directly, that is, to practise them. When you have attained direct knowledge by practically engaging in these three trainings, your point of view, which was different before, will be transformed into the same point of view. It will then be unshakeable. It will be the same as the view of the Noble Ones.

May you all change from having differences in point of view to having sameness in point of view by engaging in meditation practice for the rest of your life.

May you have the same point of view in relation to the Dhamma, the truth, which is true at all times, everywhere, and for everyone, and is timeless.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

BASED ON THE TALK

How to Fulfil Pāramī in Daily Life

Happy New Year. On this New Year's Day, I am going to give a talk, and the name of the talk is 'How to Fulfil Pāramī in Daily Life'. Do you know how to fulfil the perfections (*pāramī*) in your daily life?

Who needs to fulfil pāramī? Those who want to make an end of suffering, those who want to realise the Dhamma, and those who want to know the Truths as they really are, all need to fulfil pāramī. Those who have enough pāramī, good pāramī, can realise the Dhamma in this very life. Those who have enough pāramī can realise Nibbāna in this very life by making right effort accompanied by right concentration. Those who have not come into this existence with enough pāramī need to fulfil pāramī too for future realisation of Nibbāna. Therefore, everybody needs to fulfil pāramī in this very life, not only in this very life but in the future as well.

There are three types of individuals who attain supreme bliss, Nibbāna, the Deathless. Do you know

who they are? They are Sammāsambuddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Arahant disciples.

What is a Sammāsambuddha? What does ‘Sammāsambuddha’ mean? What is a Paccekabuddha? And what is an Arahant disciple? How can they attain the supreme bliss, Nibbāna? This is what we all need to know. ‘Sammāsambuddha’ means ‘Omniscient Buddha’, ‘Perfectly Enlightened One’, or ‘Fully Enlightened One’. He is self-enlightened. Without the aid of any teachers, He became a Buddha. ‘Paccekabuddha’ means ‘Solitary Enlightened Buddha’. Do you like this translation? Some translate it as ‘Private Buddha’ or ‘Silent Buddha’ or even ‘Solitary Buddha’. Which translation do you prefer? Maybe ‘Solitary Enlightened Buddha’ is the best of all.

A Paccekabuddha, a Solitary Enlightened One, is also a Self-Enlightened One, attaining Enlightenment without the aid of any teachers. What is the difference between these two self-enlightened Buddhas, a Fully Enlightened One and a Solitary Enlightened One? What is the difference in their qualities? It is only when an Omniscient Buddha, a Fully Enlightened One, appears in the world that it becomes possible to teach those coming to this existence with sufficient pāramī to attain Enlightenment just as He had attained Enlightenment. It is the quality of an Omniscient Buddha. Only an Omniscient Buddha can teach us the way to Enlightenment, the way to make an end of suffering. When a Paccekabuddha, a Solitary Enlightened Buddha, appears in the world, even though He is a Self-Enlightened One, He cannot teach anyone else how

to become enlightened. He can't enable anyone else to be enlightened the way He became enlightened. This is the difference between these two Buddhas.

This is explained in the commentaries. It is said that the Enlightenment of a Paccekabuddha, a Solitary Enlightened Buddha, is like the dream of a person who is mute.¹⁴ When someone who is mute has had a dream, can he tell others what he dreamed? Because he is mute, he cannot. So even though he has had a dream, he cannot tell us what he dreamed. Because of this reason, even though a Paccekabuddha is a Self-Enlightened One, He cannot put into words how He became enlightened. He cannot express in words what He has penetrated. Only an Omniscient Buddha, appearing in the world, can convey in words what He has penetrated and so explain it to others. For all of us, it is only when we hear the words of explanation that we can

¹⁴ See Commentary to Suttanipātapāli Sn.I.3 Khaggavisāṇasuttam (The Discourse on the Rhinoceros Horn):

Buddhā sayañca bujjhanti, pare ca bodhenti. paccekabuddhā sayameva bujjhanti, na pare bodhenti. attharasameva pativijjhanti, na dhammarasaṃ. na hi te lokuttaradhammaṃ paññattim āropetvā desetum sakkonti, mūgena diṭṭhasupīno viya vanacarakena nagare sāyitabyañjanaraso viya ca nesam dhammābhisamayo hoti.

Buddhas are enlightened by themselves and they enlighten others: Paccekabuddhas are enlightened by themselves (but) they do not enlighten others: they comprehend only the essence of meaning (*attharasa*), not the essence of the idea (*dhammarasa*). Because they are not able to put the supramundane Dhamma into concepts and teach it, their realisation of the Dhamma is like a dream seen by a dumb man or like the taste of a curry from the city to one who lives in the forest.

understand, we can follow, and we can practise. For that reason, in the time of a Private Buddha, a Solitary Enlightened Buddha, it is impossible for such a Buddha to teach others to attain Enlightenment. It is only because of the appearance of an Omniscient Buddha in our world that there have appeared many who could attain Enlightenment in the past, who can attain Enlightenment in the present, and who will be able to attain Enlightenment in the future, too, as long as the Buddhasāsana is still extant.

So, I have told all of you about two types of individuals. The third type is the Arahant disciples. They are those who attain Enlightenment after following the instructions of an Omniscient Buddha; putting the words of an Omniscient Buddha into practice, according to their past pāramī and present effort, they attain Enlightenment. Such Arahant disciples can teach others. What is the reason? Because they follow the words of the Omniscient Buddha and they instruct others by following the words of the Buddha. So it is that, while a Paccekabuddha, a Solitary Enlightened Buddha, even though He is a Self-enlightened One, cannot teach others the way leading to Nibbāna, the disciples of an Omniscient Buddha can teach the way leading to Nibbāna.

How is it that all of us teachers can teach all of you the way leading to Nibbāna? It is because of having heard the words of the Buddha. The way leading to Nibbāna was made known and proclaimed in the world only by the Omniscient Buddha. No other type of person possesses this ability; it belongs only to an Omniscient Buddha. Therefore, when we undertake to teach the way leading to Nibbāna, what

do you think will happen if we don't teach the way taught by the Buddha? Would it be possible for all of you to realise the Dhamma as it really is? It would be impossible. So we all need to be very careful. If we want to do missionary work, or if we want to work for the good of others – in other words, if we want to teach others to realise the Dhamma as it really is – we need to learn what the Buddha taught, follow what the Buddha taught, and teach what the Buddha taught. Only then will we be true disciples of the Buddha. Then we can be called true sons of the Omniscient Buddha. We will be maintaining the teachings of the Buddha. We will be working for the good of ourselves and of others. We will be able to help others attain Nibbāna too.

Therefore, to be able to listen to and follow the words of the Buddha, the instructions of the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha, we must practise humility. If we are not humble, we will do as we want, we will say what our hearers want to hear, and we will feel proud of ourselves. Therefore humility is very important in maintaining the teachings of the Buddha.

When the Buddha appeared in the world, He taught the Dhamma mostly for the realisation of the Dhamma in this very life. But who can realise the Dhamma, who can realise Nibbāna in this very life? As I have told all of you, those who have fulfilled good pāramī in the past, those who come into this existence with enough pāramī, can make an end of suffering. They can realise Nibbāna in this very life. In this audience, there may be some who have fulfilled good pāramī; there may be some who need to

fulfil pāramī. For that reason, you all need to know how to fulfil pāramī in your daily life. Whatever you do, in whatever condition, if you know how to fulfil pāramī, it would be for your benefit.

If we talk about fulfilling the pāramī, sometimes we think about something very special. Do you know what the pāramī are? Pāramī are the noble qualities to be fulfilled. What are they? How many pāramī are there? Ten. There are ten pāramī to be fulfilled. Those who want to realise the Dhamma, those who want to make an end of suffering, need to fulfil pāramī. Do you want to make an end of suffering? So, what do you need to do? You need to fulfil pāramī.

So there are ten pāramī, ten perfections. Can you tell me what they are? The perfection of giving, the perfection of morality, the perfection of renunciation, the perfection of wisdom, the perfection of energy, the perfection of patience or forbearance, the perfection of truthfulness, the perfection of determination, the perfection of loving-kindness, and the perfection of equanimity.

You may remember the day our bodhisatta, as the hermit Sumedha, received the definite prophecy from Dīpaṅkara Buddha. After receiving the definite prophecy, he knew for himself, 'I am a bodhisatta; I am a Buddha-to-be.' Dīpaṅkara Buddha said, 'After four incalculable and one hundred thousand eons, he is going to be a Buddha.' When he knew for himself, 'I am a bodhisatta', he reflected on the sequence of pāramī that he would have to fulfil. Nobody taught him. Without anyone else's aid, he

reflected in this way. Such is the quality of the bodhisatta. So there appeared in his mind the sequence of all the pāramī to be fulfilled, which, as I have told all of you, comprises the perfection of giving, the perfection of morality, the perfection of renunciation, and so on.

Why do the pāramī need to be fulfilled in this sequence, in this order? There is a reason. If you want to fulfil pāramī in your daily life, you need to know how important this sequence is. Only then you can fulfil pāramī in your daily life, whatever you are doing. Even when you speak, even when you say something to someone, you can fulfil ten pāramī. Do you know how to do it? Do you know that at the time you are speaking you can fulfil ten pāramī? What I mean is, even when you speak, when you tell someone something, when you say something, you can fulfil ten pāramī. This is what you all need to know. Today, I will explain how to fulfil them. Only then, if you want to fulfil pāramī, can you train your mind to be able to fulfil pāramī for the rest of your life, whatever you do, in whichever condition.

First of all, I will explain the way the Buddha taught, and then I will explain how to fulfil pāramī even when you say something to someone. So, firstly, the Buddha taught us to fulfil pāramī. The first pāramī is the perfection of giving. Why did the Buddha teach giving as the first pāramī? Among all the pāramī, giving is widely practised by all. Even ordinary people practise giving, because it is the easiest to practise, although it is the least fruitful.

What do you think? Which is easier for you to practise, giving or morality? Normally, when we are lay-people, all of us understand that giving is easier than practising morality. For this reason, when the bodhisatta, as the hermit Sumedha, reflected on the sequence of the pāramī, the first pāramī that appeared in his mind was the perfection of giving, which is the easiest to do, which is common to all beings, and which is the least fruitful.

Giving is stated first, because giving assists the development of virtue. After that, the Buddha taught the perfection of morality, or the perfection of virtue. When giving is accompanied by virtue, it is abundantly fruitful and beneficial. What is abundantly fruitful and beneficial? Giving accompanied by virtue is abundantly fruitful and beneficial. When we are going to give, we need something to offer, we need a recipient, and we need the intention to offer. How many conditions do we need? Three conditions – something to offer, the volition to offer, and a receiver. Even though we have something to offer, if we have no intention to offer, we can't make an offering. Even though we have things to offer and have the intention to offer, if there is no receiver, we can't make an offering either. Only when these three conditions are met can we accomplish giving. In other words, we can fulfil the perfection of giving. In order to have our giving yield abundant and fruitful results, we need to support it with the perfection of virtue, the perfection of morality. Without practising morality, if we make an offering, our actions will not yield abundant and fruitful and beneficial results. For this reason, the Buddha taught virtue immedi-

ately after giving. When accompanied by virtue, giving is abundantly fruitful and beneficial.

As you all know, giving is easier to do compared to the practice of morality. Also, when you want to practise giving, as I have told all of you, you need three conditions. For that reason, you need to make money, you need to acquire things, you need to find recipients, and you need an intention. You will notice that many people, especially foreigners who live in developed countries, feed dogs in their home. Compared with dogs in Myanmar, foreign dogs are better fed. Do you agree with me? What is the reason? In their past, these dogs had made an offering, they practised giving. Because of this reason, when their giving yields its result, they get better food.

Do you want to get better food as a dog? Giving can yield its results in the form of abundant wealth. Whether you are born as a human or a deva or even as a dog, you can get abundant food. But I believe you don't want to be reborn as dogs. You want to be reborn in good realms. If it is so, you all need to practise morality. If you practise giving accompanied by virtue, when such giving yields its result, you will be reborn in a good realm. And because of giving, you will become a rich man. So to be able to be reborn in good existences, we all need to practise morality. The results of mere giving by itself are unsure. So if we make an offering with the perfection of virtue, it will yield both results – wealth together with birth in a good realm. Another thing to be aware of is that we do not always have the right conditions to make offerings. As you know, we all need three conditions, and we do not always have these necessary

right conditions to accomplish giving. But do you know that, if you practise the perfection of morality, you can fulfil the perfection of giving as well?

There are three types of gift: A material gift, the gift of harmlessness, and the gift of Dhamma (*āmisadāna*, *abhayadāna*, *dhammadāna*). *Āmisadāna* is ‘material gift’. *Abhayadāna* is ‘the gift of harmlessness’, sometimes translated as ‘the gift of fearlessness’. *Dhammadāna* is ‘the gift of Dhamma’.

So if you practise morality, you can give the gift of harmlessness. Consider that, in practising the five precepts, you refrain from killing, you refrain from stealing, you refrain from sexual misconduct, you refrain from telling lies, and you refrain from taking intoxicants. In refraining from these wrong actions, you give. You give the gift of harmlessness. Compared to a material gift, the gift of harmlessness is superior. It is what you can give all the time if you practise morality throughout your whole life. So that is how, if you practise the perfection of morality, you can give this gift, the gift of harmlessness. You refrain from killing; you give the gift of harmlessness. You refrain from stealing; you give the gift of harmlessness. You refrain from sexual misconduct; you give the gift of harmlessness, of fearlessness. By refraining from telling lies, you give the gift of harmlessness. Refraining from taking intoxicants, you give the gift of harmlessness. As I have told all of you, without the assistance of virtue, giving cannot yield abundant results. That is why the Buddha taught about virtue immediately after teaching about giving.

Now, to make giving and the perfection of morality stable and strong, we need the assistance of another perfection. What is that? The perfection of renunciation. Because of this reason, the Buddha taught the third perfection, the perfection of renunciation. Without the assistance of renunciation, we cannot really practise the perfection of giving and the perfection of morality. What does renunciation mean to you? How do you understand it? Giving up attachment to sensual pleasures is one type of renunciation. Another one is living the ordained life. So now, all of you are practising here. Some are ordained, some are not. However, all of you have renounced. You all are fulfilling renunciation. All of you are now here. All of you are fulfilling the perfection of virtue. Because of this reason, you are giving the gift of harmlessness. That is why you are fulfilling the perfection of giving too. Are you aware of this? It is not only when you give a gift of materiality that you fulfil the perfection of giving. By practising morality purely, you are giving the gift of harmlessness every day, all the time. But without support from the perfection of renunciation, you cannot accomplish giving, nor can you practise morality purely. Why is it so? As I have told all of you, renunciation is giving up attachment to sensuality – sensual pleasures – with regard to both living things and non-living things. If you are attached to the things you possess, can you give? Can you perform an act of giving? Therefore, without the assistance of the perfection of renunciation, you cannot really fulfil the perfection of giving. Hence it is only when you are assisted by the perfection of renunciation that you can give up things you possess. That is why renunciation purifies your ful-

filment of giving. Also, if you don't practise renunciation, you cannot really practise the perfection of morality.

Why is it so? Do you know why it is so? What is the practice of morality? Killing – what is killing? Why do people kill? Sometimes we kill because of greed. But when people kill, they kill with anger. Sometimes people kill because they desire something. When people don't get what they want, they are very angry about it. Sometimes people kill because of that anger. The cause is greed, the desire to get something. When they don't get what they want, they become very angry, and then they kill.

Why do we steal? Because of greed, attachment, craving, and desire. Why do people commit sexual misconduct? Because of craving, because of attachment, because of lust, because of passion. In other words, because of greed, because of attachment. Why do we tell lies? Sometimes because of greed, sometimes because of worry which is rooted in anger. Whenever greed and anger arise, delusion accompanies them, delusion follows. So people tell lies sometimes because of anger, sometimes because of greed, because of attachment, or because of their fear of losing something, which fear is rooted in anger. So who can practise morality purely? Okay, please consider the last precept. Why do people take intoxicants? Sometimes because of greed, sometimes because of attachment, sometimes because of craving, sometimes because of anger too. So the cause of committing all these wrong actions is defilement. As I have told all of you, renunciation means giving up attachment to living things and non-living things.

To be able to practise the perfection of morality purely, you need to give up your attachments, you need to give up your anger, you need to give up your delusion, you need to give up your pride, you need to give up your fear, you need to give up your worry. Only then can you purely practise morality.

For that reason, without the help of the perfection of renunciation, nobody can practise perfectly either the perfection of morality or the perfection of giving. That is why the sequence is very important. Without it, the pāramī can't really be practised well. Without the help of the subsequent perfection, the preceding perfection cannot be practised so as to give abundant results. So renunciation is very, very important. If you don't renounce your attachments; if you don't give up your attachment to all things, both living and non-living; and if you don't give up your attachment to the instructions of your defilements, you will commit – we will commit – all sorts of wrong actions. Thus, we cannot fulfil the perfections, the pāramī, successfully.

After the perfection of renunciation, what did the Buddha teach? The perfection of wisdom. Without help from the perfection of wisdom, we cannot really practise giving, morality, and renunciation. Why do we give? Because we know the benefit of giving. True? Why do we practise morality? Because we know the benefit of practising morality. Why do we give up attachment to living and non-living things, and why do we live the ordained life? Because we know the benefits of doing so. Without understanding the benefit of all the three perfections, can we practise successfully? It is impossible. Because of

this reason, the perfection of wisdom makes it possible for the former three perfections to be fulfilled successfully. Do you see? So now you understand why the Buddha taught the perfections in this sequence. Without the assistance of the perfection of wisdom, we cannot successfully fulfil the former three perfections. The more we understand the benefit of giving, and the more we understand the benefit of morality, and the more we understand the benefit of renunciation, the greater will be our success in practising. That is why the perfection of wisdom is taught as the fourth perfection.

What is the fifth one? The perfection of energy – in Pāli, *virīya*. So without the assistance of the perfection of energy, can we accomplish giving? What do you think? Can we practise virtue or morality? Can we renounce successfully? No, no. To make an offering, we need to make an effort. Although we might understand the benefit of giving, if we don't make an effort, we cannot give successfully. Therefore we need help from the perfection of energy to perform giving, even though we have the right understanding of the benefit of giving. The same is true of practising morality. Even though we know the benefit of practising morality, if we don't make much effort to refrain from killing, to refrain from stealing, to refrain from committing sexual misconduct, to refrain from telling lies, and to refrain from taking intoxicants, how could we possibly fulfil this perfection, namely, the perfection of morality?

So without the help of the perfection of energy, no one can fulfil the former four perfections. Giving up attachment, giving up the defilements, and giving up

the instructions of the defilements to do wrong is renunciation. We need to make much effort to be able to give up attachment, or to be able to give up the instructions of the defilements. We need to make much effort to purify our morality. So now you know how you should fulfil pāramī and how important this sequence is.

What is the next perfection? The sixth one, right? The perfection of forbearance, or the perfection of patience. As I have told all of you, to be able to practise giving successfully, to be able to practise morality successfully, and to be able to practise renunciation successfully, you need to make much effort. Whenever we make a lot of effort, whoever we are, we may feel tired – mentally tired and sometimes physically tired as well. At that time we need the support of the perfection of patience. Without the perfection of forbearance, how can we continue our practice? How can we successfully fulfil the practice of the perfections? That is why the perfection of patience is taught immediately after the perfection of energy.

Patience is the way to Nibbāna. Are you someone who practises patience, or are you not such a person? If you want to realise Nibbāna, you must be someone who practises the perfection of patience. Only then can you purify your morality and practise the preceding five perfections. Even though you know and understand how beneficial it is to give, how beneficial the practice of morality is, and how beneficial practising renunciation is, and even though you make much effort, yet if you have no patience, you cannot do what is good, and you cannot

maintain your goodness. If we talk about maintaining something, we should talk about maintaining our goodness. To be able to maintain our goodness, we all need to practise patience. Patience means accepting. The manifestation of patience is acceptance. Very beautiful! Accepting both the desirable and the undesirable is the perfection of patience. Do you accept both what is desirable and what is undesirable? No, no. You accept only the desirable, not the undesirable. How can you fulfil the pāramī successfully while acting in this way? That is why the perfection of patience is the way to Nibbāna.

The characteristic of patience is tolerance of the wrong-doings of others; the manifestation of patience is acceptance – accepting both the desirable and the undesirable. And its proximate cause is seeing things as they really are. We all want to accept only what is desirable. We all feel very angry when we encounter undesirable things. Which can make you more mature – experiencing what is desirable or what is undesirable? Do you see? Undesirable experiences allow you to mature. So the undesirable is what you should welcome. Due to craving and being proud of yourself, you remain immature. So the more you are blamed and the more you are complained against, the more mindful you become; and you are driven to reflect on yourself, ‘What is wrong with me? What did I do? What have I done? Is there something wrong with me, or they are just complaining without any reason?’ You need to reflect, you need to investigate, you need to analyse, you need to be more mindful, you need to train yourself more, and you need to be careful. Therefore, the undesirable is very, very valuable for all of us. This

may be very, very difficult to accept, but we all need to practise, we all need to accept it. We need training. Only when we understand this point are we very happy to practise. Even though it hurts us, even though it is difficult, we try, we try. We need to maintain equanimity in the face of adversities. The Buddha gave the simile of the great earth to illustrate how the perfection of equanimity supports the perfection of patience.¹⁵ Even though people throw filthy rubbish and stinking refuse onto the great earth, this great earth remains unmoved and unaffected. It continues to provide the support for all to live on. And so it is for our practice of the perfection of patience. In spite of all the blame, accusations, unkind words, and all the other desirable and unde-

¹⁵ See M.II.2.2 Mahārāhulovādasuttam (MN 62 The Great Discourse on Advice to Rāhula):

Pathavīsamaṃ, Rāhula, bhāvanaṃ bhāvehi. Pathavīsamañhi te, Rāhula, bhāvanaṃ bhāvayato uppannā manāpāmanāpā phassā cittaṃ na pariyādāya ṭhassanti. Seyyathāpi, Rāhula, pathaviyā sucimpi nikkhipanti, asucimpi nikkhipanti, gūthagatampi nikkhipanti, muttagatampi nikkhipanti, khelāgatampi nikkhipanti, pubbagatampi nikkhipanti, lohītagatampi nikkhipanti, na ca tena pathavī aṭṭiyati vā harāyati vā jigucchati vā; evameva kho tvam, Rāhula, pathavīsamaṃ bhāvanaṃ bhāvehi. Pathavīsamañhi te, Rāhula, bhāvanaṃ bhāvayato uppannā manāpāmanāpā phassā cittaṃ na pariyādāya ṭhassanti.

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people throw clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood on the earth, and the earth is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

sirable circumstances we face in our journey to fulfil pāramī, like the great earth, we must remain unmoved and unaffected. We must accept and welcome all adversities that may befall us while remaining steadfast in our quest to fulfil pāramī. So right understanding can tell us how to live a better life. Now you understand how important the practice of patience is.

Another aspect of the perfection of patience, which is supported by the perfection of wisdom, is the understanding of the natural law of Dhamma, which is void of being, void of soul, void of person, and is only cause and effect. Only when you know the natural law of Dhamma directly can you practise this perfection fully. This aspect of the perfection of patience is called *Dhammanijjhānakhanti*. If you have the understanding that there are no beings, and that there is only the natural law of Dhamma, such an understanding will make it easier for you to fulfil all the pāramī. I will give an example, telling one of the stories of our bodhisatta.

This story was told by the Buddha regarding how He fulfilled pāramī as a bodhisatta. In one of his past lives, the bodhisatta was a monkey. He saved a Brahmin who had fallen into a deep chasm. Exhausted by the strenuous exertion he had expended to bring the man out of that danger, the bodhisatta trustingly fell asleep in the lap of the man he had saved. With the evil thought of eating the flesh of his rescuer, the wicked man hit the monkey's head with a stone. Without showing any anger and with great patience, bearing the injury on his head, the bodhisatta continued his effort to save the man from the

danger of wild beasts. He showed the man the way out of the forest by means of the drops of blood that fell from his head as he jumped from tree to tree. Can you act in this way? It is very, very difficult.

How was the bodhisatta able to do this, even though he was a monkey in that life? Because he understood the natural law of Dhamma; because he understood the natural law which is void of beings. Understanding the natural law of Dhamma means understanding cause and effect. If our bodhisatta didn't understand the natural law, which is only cause and effect, he would not have been able to do this. He observed that there is only cause and effect. He thought, 'Because of the hunter's wickedness, and because of his injuring me, I have an opportunity to practise patience. By fulfilling the perfection of patience, and understanding the benefit thereof, I am going to become a Buddha in the future. He has helped me on my way to becoming a Buddha.'

If we regard someone as a doer, we can't forgive him. We want to take revenge, because we can't see the actual cause. The actual cause is not the person. The actual cause is ignorance and defilement. Because of ignorance and defilement, all the people in the world did wrong in the past, do wrong in the present, and will do wrong in the future. If we view ourselves as recipients of other's malicious actions, thereby failing to understand the natural law, we hold grudges against those who wrong us, and we look for an opportunity to take revenge on them.

When we understand the natural law, which is void of being and which is only cause and effect, we can

maintain our goodness. That is why understanding the natural law of Dhamma is very, very important for all of us in maintaining our goodness along the way to Nibbāna. Without understanding this law, it would be very difficult for us to practise patience, to endure, to practise forbearance, and to be tolerant. Do you get what I mean? That is why you all need to pay attention to the truth that is void of being, void of soul, void of person, and is only cause and effect.

Who is it that does wrong? Who is the wrong-doer? Is it you yourself who does wrong, who did wrong, who is going to do wrong? No! You are not the doer. Only ignorance and defilement cause you to do wrong. Therefore, if someone does you wrong, you can easily forgive if you find the real cause. How unfortunate it is for them, that they have done wrong! We don't need to punish anyone. Those who have done wrong punish themselves by their wrong actions. If it is possible, and if we have Noble mind, we should educate them rather than seek retribution against them. We might say, 'My dear friend, you should not do so. If you act in this way, you are going to suffer one day. You are not the one who did this. It is only because of ignorance and the instructions of the defilements, and because you don't bring your defilements under control, that you do wrong. If you can bring your defilements under control, you will not do wrong. You are not the doer; you just receive the instructions of the defilements without bringing them under control.' Is this true? I want to share one thing with all of you. It is not our being born as humans that makes us wise; it is only by bringing our defilements under control that we

become wise. Similarly, it is not our being born as humans that makes us foolish; it is only our failure to bring our defilements under control that makes us foolish. True? That is why the cause of our foolishness and wrong-doing is the defilements. The cause is ignorance, not knowing the truth. The minds of those who don't penetrate the Four Noble Truths are covered with ignorance. Therefore they will do wrong. Because of wrong-doing, they are going to suffer in the future. So we don't need to impose any punishment. The Buddha never imposed any punishment on any bhikkhus. He just shared this advice: 'Bhikkhus, if you have done something wrong, this is the way to cure it.' He never handed out any punishment directly. If we are honest, we can listen to the instructions of the Buddha to purify our morality and our actions. That is why, to be able to practise patience, to be able to practise all the perfections, we all need to see the actual cause, which is beyond our conventional 'eye'.

We see beings, we see men, we see women. We see them as the cause. We don't see the actual cause. If we don't see the actual cause, how can we live peacefully? How can we practise patience? How can we make our mind and our life mature? Now you see how important the sequence is.

What is the next perfection? The perfection of truthfulness. How can we fulfil the perfection of truthfulness? By telling the truth, and by doing as we have promised. Is there any circumstance or any occasion in your life when you didn't fulfil a promise to someone? If you don't keep your promises, you are not fulfilling this perfection. Whenever you are going

to say something, say the truth. It doesn't matter whether others like it or whether they don't; the important thing is to tell the truth, so as to be able to fulfil the perfection of truthfulness.

But we all need to know the right time to speak, even though we are going to tell the truth. The truth is not good at all times for all people; we need to understand the right time and the right place to say it, and the right person to say it to. So even though we intend to say the truth, we must understand when to speak and when not to speak.

The Buddha didn't say that we must speak the truth all the time.¹⁶ If what we might say is unbeneficial, even though we know it is the truth, then it is better not to say anything about it. If it is not the right place to speak or the right person to hear our words, we should say nothing at that time. We need to know the right time. We must practise the perfection of patience so that what we are going to say can be beneficial for others, in the right place and at the right time. By doing so, we can also fulfil the perfection of patience.

What is the next perfection? The perfection of determination. Even though you know the benefit of all the perfections, even though you practise patience, and even though you know the Truths, if you have no determination, you can't fulfil the perfections successfully.

¹⁶ MN.II.1.8 Abhayarājakumārasuttam (MN 58 The Discourse Concerning Prince Abhaya).

Now, consider how the bodhisatta, the monkey, practised the perfection of determination. Even though the hunter harmed him, he continued what he was doing until he succeeded. He saved the hunter by showing him the way out of the forest with the drops of his own blood that fell as he jumped from tree to tree. Therefore, without the support of the perfection of determination, we cannot practise all the former perfections successfully. We must be determined. When we practise meditation also, we must be very determined.

What is the next perfection? Loving-kindness. What do you think? Can we fulfil pāramī if we harm others? Can we fulfil pāramī if we harm ourselves and others? It is impossible. Who can fulfil pāramī? Those who know how to act for the benefit of themselves and others are those who can fulfil pāramī. That is why, without acting for the good of oneself and others, it is not possible to fulfil the pāramī. Therefore, immediately after the perfection of determination, the Buddha taught the perfection of loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is acting for the welfare of others. Giving is acting for the good of others. Practising morality is giving a gift of harmlessness, not only to oneself, but also to others. If you kill a mosquito, you see that the mosquito dies. You see only the result, which is the death of the mosquito. What do you think? Can we harm others without harming ourselves? We can't. If you kill mosquitoes, you see the death of the mosquitoes. Because of that killing, one day you will suffer the consequences. So you harm yourself. Anytime you harm others, you harm yourself. And that is why we can't harm others without harming ourselves.

Therefore, whenever you disturb others, you disturb yourself. Can you disturb others without disturbing yourself? No. If you want happiness, you need to make other people happy. This is a law. This is action and reaction. This is the natural law. Regardless of whether the Buddha had taught this law or whether the Buddha hadn't taught it, it is nonetheless always and everywhere true. So we can't harm anyone without harming ourselves. We can't disturb others without disturbing ourselves. Because of that, we all need to practise loving-kindness and act for the happiness of others as well as the happiness of ourselves. What is *mettā*, loving-kindness? *Mettā* is acting for the good of others. Whenever you want to act for the good of others, if you focus merely on what you yourself want, it is not real *mettā*.

We all need to emulate the Buddha. Early every morning, the Buddha surveyed the world with His 'Buddha eye' and considered, 'To whom should I teach the Dhamma today?' Someone would appear to the Buddha's eye because of their past pāramī. No matter how far it was, the Buddha went there. No matter how many miles away, He went there for the benefit of that person. Sometimes He saw that that person was going to take refuge in the Triple Gem. What was the person going to do? He was going to take refuge in the Triple Gem. Not a very high degree of attainment. Yet even for just this much, knowing the benefit of taking refuge, the Buddha went there and taught the Dhamma. After listening to the Dhamma, the person would take refuge in the Triple Gem.

Mettā is doing something so that another might benefit according to that person's capability, and not just according to the way we want. If we emphasise just what we want, and it is beyond the other person's capacity, we are merely fulfilling our own desire. We are not considering what someone else can do. That is why genuine mettā means acting for the good of others in terms of what benefit they can receive, and not what they can't. Sometimes the Buddha went to see someone because the Buddha saw that the person was going to practise the five precepts. Sometimes the Buddha saw that someone was going to attain First Path and Fruition. The Buddha would teach to such an extent only, because the Buddha knew that the person could accomplish only that much. This is mettā. If we focus on doing something we ourselves want, saying, 'This is my mettā, this is my loving-kindness', we are not acting correctly. If we do so, there will be conflict even between parents and children, or between friends. Therefore, if you don't want any conflict to arise, develop true loving-kindness, and act for their good according to their capacity. Only then can you maintain your goodness. You will not be angry with them in the process. If they don't do as you want them to do, how do you feel? You feel angry. You don't want to work for their benefit anymore. You will think, 'They don't listen to me. I will not give them a hand anymore. I will give up. I will abandon them.' This is not mettā. You do things like this based on your desire.

Many parents also display such tendencies, and say, 'This is my mettā. You must follow.' No, no, no. Please, don't act in this way. Neither will I act in this

way toward all of you. I will suggest only what you are capable of. If you come and report to me, I will listen. Sometimes, I will suggest to you, 'Please come to interview.' If you don't come, I will not say anything, because you are not willing to come. I act in this way because I want to be happy with my actions. However, coming to interview regularly is important. So now you know how to practise the perfection of loving-kindness.

What is the last one? The perfection of equanimity. Without the assistance of the perfection of equanimity, you cannot really develop loving-kindness towards others. In other words, you cannot act for the good of others if you don't develop equanimity towards yourself and others. So, what is the perfection of equanimity? Equanimity has the characteristic of promoting the aspect of neutrality. Its function is to see things impartially, because equanimity purifies loving-kindness. In order to develop impartiality, one must maintain equanimity towards the wrongs inflicted by others when one is providing for their welfare. This is very important. When we undertake to benefit others, we can't persevere for the long haul unless we practise the perfection of equanimity. Why? Even though we might be acting for the welfare of many, among those who receive good actions and loving-kindness and wishes of well-being from us, there may be those who complain, who insult us, and who blame us, directly to our face and behind our backs. At such a time, if we don't understand the natural law of Dhamma, which is void of being, void of person, void of soul – there is only cause and effect – we can't continue working for their good. We must be ready when we intend to act for the

good of others. How should we be ready? We may experience both expected things and unexpected things, desirable and undesirable. Everyone expects a good response and a good reaction when undertaking to act for the good of others. If you have expectations like this, you will suffer a lot, and you will not be able to maintain your goodness. You will argue with that person too. You will be angry with that person. You will eventually give up and abandon that person.

To develop equanimity does not mean we should abandon others. For example, as we go along the way fulfilling the pāramī and striving for the good of others, we do something to benefit a certain person. Perhaps he doesn't accept it, or he is not happy with what we have done. We should think in this way: 'He is not ready to accept my action, which will benefit him, because he is not yet mature, and so he doesn't understand.' In such a case, leave him alone for the time being; continue your trip, continue your journey to Nibbāna. And along the way, one day you may meet with that person again. If you think, 'Now may be the right time to say it again', please try to say it again. This is how you practise equanimity towards him. So loving-kindness should be supported and accompanied by equanimity. It is only when we develop the perfection of equanimity that we can maintain our goodness; we can maintain the way we are, striving on without faltering and with happiness. For that reason, the Buddha taught the perfection of equanimity as the last perfection. So without practising the perfection of equanimity, you cannot successfully accomplish giving. Sometimes, because of seeing the fault of the receiver, you

want them to be free from suffering (which is karuṇā, compassion), and no matter how much we want them not to be separated from what they have achieved (muditā), their circumstances will unfold according to their kamma. This acknowledgment is upekkhā.

Even though we strive to benefit others with the ninth perfection, the perfection of loving-kindness, and even though we persevere when we encounter difficulty and want to continue helping them, it is nonetheless true that, many times or sometimes, their circumstances cannot be as we wish, they cannot be as we want. Their experience will accord with their kamma. Understanding and accepting this is developing equanimity towards oneself and others.

We need to develop equanimity towards our own actions, too. Sometimes we are very willing to act for the good of others, but we need to know the right condition and the right time. If it is not the right time, we should develop equanimity towards our own willingness and intention, too. If we don't develop equanimity towards our intention or our volition, we are going to do something wrong at the wrong place and towards the wrong person. That is why we must always be very mindful, and must consider whether we should act or not. Therefore, we need to develop equanimity not only towards others but towards all our actions when it is not the right time or not the right place or not the right person. This is equanimity.

So now you understand how important the sequence of the perfections taught by the Buddha is. Without

the help of each perfection, each pāramī, one after another according to the sequence, we cannot really fulfil all ten pāramī.

Having understood the sequence in fulfilling pāramī, you can now apply this understanding in order to fulfil parami in your daily life. I will give you an example.

Even when you speak you can fulfil pāramī. When you speak, you must say the truth; this is fulfilling the pāramī of truthfulness. Whatever you are going to say, it must be the truth. If you tell the truth, you fulfil the perfection of truthfulness.

Because you tell the truth, you fulfil the perfection of morality. Because you tell the truth, you give the gift of harmlessness. Because you tell the truth, you fulfil the perfection of wisdom. Why can we say the truth? Because you understand how important it is to say the truth. Because of telling the truth, we give up our desire to say something wrong. It means we fulfil the perfection of renunciation.

Also, in order to tell the truth, especially if it goes against conventional social behaviour, we need to exert effort. Sometimes strong effort is necessary to uphold the truth against the torrent of greed and delusion in the world. Hence, when you tell the truth, you are fulfilling the perfection of energy.

In addition, because we tell the truth, we fulfil the perfection of loving-kindness. By telling the truth, we act for the good of others.

As I explained earlier, even when we are going to tell the truth, we need the support of the perfection of wisdom. We need to know the right time and the right place to say the truth, and also the right person to say it to. If it would be unbeneficial for the listener, it is better to keep silent and wait for the right conditions to tell the truth. We must also practise the perfection of patience and wait for the right conditions to tell the truth. Only then can what we say be truly beneficial to others.

Moreover, to be able to say the truth, we must be determined. We must be very determined. Sometimes we are afraid of losing something by telling the truth. People all over the world are afraid of losing something if they tell the truth. So we must be determined to tell the truth. If you maintain your goodness and tell the truth, you fulfil the perfection of determination.

Also, because of telling the truth, you may encounter difficulties in that particular instance. But in the long run, you will be appreciated by many. So you must be determined and you need to put forth effort. If you choose not to tell the truth, maybe to avoid some unpleasantness at that particular time, then you aren't fulfilling the perfection of equanimity. But if you say the truth at the right time, accepting all the outcomes that might arise, whether desirable or undesirable, expected or unexpected, you are developing the perfection of equanimity.

In this way, you can fulfil all ten pāramī while you are speaking to others. Once you understand this, and understand that it applies not only to speech but

How to Fulfil Pāramī in Daily Life

to everything you do, and if you know how to fulfil the ten parami, you can fulfil all of them for the entire remainder of your life.

In this process of fulfilling parami in your daily life, there is an underlying quality that you cannot do without, and it is mindfulness. If you are unmindful, it is impossible to fulfil pāramī in your daily life. Impossible.

Mindfulness is the leading factor that can support you to be able to maintain your goodness and fulfil all ten pāramī in this very life – for happiness in this very life, for happiness in the future, and for the realisation of Nibbāna in this very life or in the future.

May you be able to fulfil the ten pāramī in your daily life!

Having fulfilled the ten pāramī, may you realise the supreme bliss of Nibbāna in this very life!

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

BASED ON THE TALK

A Journey of Self-Discovery

Today I am going to give a talk. The name of the talk is 'A Journey of Self-Discovery'. People all over the world make different journeys. Some make long journeys, some make difficult journeys, and some make cultural journeys. Some make a journey to freedom – freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of worship, and freedom of the individual. In countries where there is no freedom, people make a journey to freedom, which means a journey to democracy. So this country, Singapore, is a country where they have successfully made the journey to democracy.

Are you familiar with Mahatma Gandhi, the famous non-violent leader of India? In 1930, Mahatma Gandhi began a three-hundred-mile protest march against British rule. This was also a type of journey. Our country too has been making a long journey to democracy, wherein a lot of people's lives have been sacrificed.

Some make a journey to success. Are you all making a journey to success? Are you a successful person

A Journey of Self-Discovery

now? All these are endless journeys. I want all of you to make a journey which can arrive at an end. In other words, I want all of you to make a journey which has an end. I think all of you have also done some of the sorts of journeys I have mentioned, none of which are very important journeys. Today I want all of you to begin a journey of self-discovery.

Researchers do different types of research for their discoveries. Many different types of researchers do different kinds of research and discover various things such as land creatures, water creatures, and many other discoveries. Because of their research, we get the opportunity to study what is beyond our reach. Even though we are grateful to them, theirs is also an endless journey. As I have told all of you, today I want all of you to do research to see who you are and what you are. After seeing who you are and knowing who you are, you will then arrive at the knowledge that you have to gain by yourself, and that you can't get by depending on others.

Let me ask you a question. Do you know who you are? You know many things, right? You are very interested in many external things but not in yourself. You know, you are making an endless journey. I will let you consider computer technology. Is there any end to it? Without encountering the end of these external things, you will finally arrive at your own end. That is why I want all of you to make a journey which has an end, the journey of self-discovery. Along your journey of self-discovery, you will come to know who you are. If you don't know who you are, even though you know many other things, you can't really make use of your life.

We are very interested in the things that attract our minds. Because of this reason, people pursue the sensuality that attracts their minds. Do you agree with me? All these sensual things are colourful, they are attractive. They attract your entire mind. Have you ever practised meditation? Does your mind like to be with the meditation object for a long time? You know well. Do you know what the reason is? The reason is that even though the meditation objects are wholesome objects, they are not colourful and they have no attraction, so you are not interested in them, even though they are really beneficial for all of you. Although you know meditation is beneficial, you don't want to do it continuously.

Let me ask you another question. Do you really want to accomplish your own good? I believe that all of you want to act for your own benefit. But in a practical sense, you are not really acting for your own benefit. Because of this reason the Buddha said, 'Difficult to do is that which is truly beneficial for oneself. Easy to do is that which is unbeneficial for oneself.'¹⁸ Because of defilement, our mind inclines towards taking sensual objects except for when we do good deeds. Do you agree with me? I have told all of you, because of defilement, our mind inclines to bad deeds except for when we do good deeds. In this way, instead of acting for your own benefit, you

¹⁸ Dhṛ. 163:

Sukarāṇi asādhūṇi, attano ahitāṇi ca.

yaṃ ve hitaṅca sādhuṅca, taṃ ve paramadukkaraṃ.

Easy to do are things that are bad and harmful to oneself.
But exceedingly difficult to do are things that are good
and beneficial.

make an endless journey led by your defilements. Is it true? Who is the leader? Not you! The defilements are in charge of your life.

I am telling all of you this because your wisdom and mindfulness must be the leading factors if you are to make a journey of self-discovery. Do you really want to know who you are? If so, you must train your mind, your wisdom, and your mindfulness to be the leading factors on the way to discovering yourself. For sure you all remember what your friends look like. For sure your friends also know you and your appearance. For sure you also know and remember your own appearance. But you can't know who you are just by knowing and remembering your appearance.

Have you ever made a journey of self-discovery in your life? Many of you might answer, 'Never, Bhante. We haven't even thought about making a journey of self-discovery.' Do you want to begin a journey of self-discovery? Very important, very important. To know who you are, you need to begin a journey of self-discovery. To know where you are, you need to begin a journey of self-discovery. Do you know where you are? You know that you are now in this Chinese monastery, listening to this Dhamma talk. But you don't really know where you are. You know in the way all people know, not the way you must know. There is more to it than this. Only when you begin a journey of self-discovery and are successful in that journey will you know who you are and where you are. More than that, you will know where else you need to go.

A Journey of Self-Discovery

I will discuss how to begin a journey of self-discovery based on the teaching of the Buddha. To be able to start a journey of self-discovery, you all need to do one thing: You need to train to be skillful in reading the habits of your own minds. Now today, based on that, I will explain how to begin a journey of self-discovery.

As you all know, ever since we were born we have been doing three actions every day. Do you know what they are? What are the three actions that we have been doing not only in this very life but also throughout the round of rebirths? They are good and bad bodily, verbal, and mental actions. Nothing other than these. Sometimes I ask my listeners, ‘How many actions are we doing each day?’ They answer, ‘They are uncountable, Bhante.’ Yes, that is true, but we must know more accurately that we can group all these uncountable actions into just three kinds. They are just bodily actions, verbal actions, and mental actions, either good or bad, wholesome or unwholesome. Just these.

Bodily and verbal actions follow mental actions. So we can say that mental action is the leading one. Because of this reason, the Buddha said, ‘Mind leads the world’ – in Pāḷi, ‘*Cittena nīyati loko.*’¹⁹ When you

¹⁹ SN.I.1.7.2 Cittasuttam (SN 1.62 The Discourse on the Mind):

*Kenassu nīyati loko, kenassu parikassati,
Kissassu ekadhammassa, sabbeva vasamanvagū’ti.
Cittena nīyati loko, cittena parikassati;
Cittassa ekadhammassa, sabbeva vasamanvagū’ti.*

By what is the world led around? By what is it dragged here and there?

hear ‘world’, what do you think of? The world we are living in? What is your opinion? What world does the Buddha mean?

I believe all of you will call to mind the world you live in. The Buddha didn’t mean this. The Buddha said that this fathom-long body is the world.²⁰ The trained mind leads the world in one direction, and the untrained mind will lead your world in another direction. As the Buddha said, ‘Mind leads the world.’ You all should train your minds to be able to lead your own world in the good direction.

Why do people do as they do in the present? Why did people do as they did in the past? Why will people do wrong bodily and verbal actions in the future? What is the reason? What is the cause? The cause is the mental action which is led by defilement. So the cause of wrong action and wrong speech is mental action led by defilement. The Buddha said, ‘If you are not skillful in the habits of others’ minds, it

What is the one thing that has all under its control?
The world is led around by mind; by mind it’s dragged
here and there.

Mind is the one thing that has all under its control.

²⁰ AN.I.5.5 Rohitassasuttaṃ (AN 4.45 The Discourse Concerning Rohitassa): *‘Avuso, imasmimīyeva byāmamatte kaḷevare sasaññimhi samanake lokañca paññāpemi lokasamudayañca lokanirodhañca lokanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadan’ti’* – ‘Friend, it is in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim (1) the world, (2) the origin of the world, (3) the cessation of the world, and (4) the way leading to the cessation of the world’.

doesn't matter, but you should be skillful in the habits of your own mind.’²¹

Is it possible to know another’s mind? Is it possible or impossible to know the minds of others? It is possible for those who train the mind to know others’ minds. There is a way to train in the teaching of the Buddha to know others’ minds. While it is possible to know the minds of others, is it easy? No, it is not. It is possible but not easy. This being so, do you know your mind? Is it possible for you to know your own mind? Possible. Is it easy? It is possible, but it is also not easy for those who are not mindful and those who are unwilling. Are you skillful in the habits of your mind? Are you someone who is skillful or not? You are not skillful in reading the habits of your mind.

The wrong actions that you have done, and do, and are going to do – do they occur because you are skillful in the habits of your mind, or because you are not skillful? Because you have no skill in reading the habits of your mind, you have done and do and are again going to do wrong bodily and verbal actions. The root cause of all these wrong actions is wrong mental action which is led by the defilements.

²¹ AN.X.2.1.1 Sacittasuttam (AN 10.51 The Discourse on One’s Own Mind): ‘*No ce, bhikkhave, bhikkhu paracittapariyāyakusalo hoti, atha ‘sacittapariyāyakusalo bhavissāmī’ti — evañhi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabbam’* – ‘Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not skilled in the ways of others’ minds [should train himself thus]: “I will be skilled in the ways of my own mind.” It is in this way that you should train yourselves’.

But you can't stop doing such wrong actions yet. After you have done wrong bodily and verbal actions, you feel guilty as a consequence. You know you shouldn't do what is wrong, but you can't refrain from doing it because you have no skill in reading the habits of your own mind. In the past you have done a lot of things which make you feel guilty, but you are going to do many such things again, and you are doing so in the present too, because you have no skill in reading the habits of your own mind. Moreover, lacking skill in the habits of your mind, you don't know your weak points or your strong points. For this reason, people pretend that they are very good. Do you agree with me? If you don't know your mind, if you are not skillful in the habits of your own mind, you can't develop honesty. If you yourself are dishonest, how can you make real progress in your life? Almost everyone in the world expends much effort to make other people understand them. They expect to be understood by others. Is it true or not? Yes. You try so many ways to get others to understand you, but you don't try to know yourself at all. You adopt all sorts of pretences to gain the respect of other people, but you should ask yourself one question: Do I respect myself? Even though people gain the respect of others, they can't respect themselves. This is because they spend their lives obeying the instructions of the defilements of their minds. Which is more important, self-respect or the respect of others? Yes, it is very important to have self-respect. Only when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind will you avoid doing things that prevent you from respecting yourself, and instead you will do what is really necessary.

A Journey of Self-Discovery

Even just today, since this morning, before you came here, how many actions have you done that don't allow you to respect yourself? So to make sure, I want to repeat my question: Do you really want to know who you are? Are you really acting for your own true benefit? If you really want to benefit yourself, there is no other way than to train yourself to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. If this is true, then how should one go about doing so?

Now I am going to explain this to all of you. For those of you who really want to strive for your own good, who want to develop self-respect, and who want to know who you are, I would like to explain how to train yourself to be skillful in the habits of your own mind.

Before explaining, I want to share a little bit more about success. Many people set out on a journey to success. Is success very important in your life? Suppose you become a very successful person; what will you do then? Success is a journey, not a destination. Why? If you are successful in something you want, something you expect, there is still no end to the desire and expectation for even more success. Your defilement will demand that you take another journey to success. If your goal is fame and gain related to sensuality, it is just a journey, not a destination, because fame and gain and sensuality are endless.

The Buddha said, 'The beginning of saṃsāra is unknown and unknowable.'²² Because you are pursu-

²² SN.III.1.10.7 Gaddulabaddhasuttam (SN 22.99 The Discourse on the Leash-Bound); also in SN.II.4.1.9 Daṇḍasuttam

ing sensuality, because sensuality is your goal, and because the attainment of sensual pleasure is what you consider success, you never arrive at an end and can't even see an end, because sensuality has no end. What is the driving force behind such a journey to success? You, or your impure defilements? Do you get the answer? I know the answer. I used to be a person on just such a journey to success. I came to know that the driving force was not me, it was the defilements that drove me along that journey to success. Do you see? I don't think you understand. Do you see that the defilements drive you on your journey to success? Wanting, desiring, and craving are never satisfied with what they get and are always demanding more things, new things, over and over again. So the defilements are the driving force and the cause of a journey to success, and there will be no end if you just follow what your defilements tell you to do. We therefore have to serve the body in terms of what it needs, since we have been born as humans and possess bodies. I want you all to do what is very important, so I need to explain to you what is really not important. That is why I am explaining so much.

You know that you need clothes, you know that you need shelter, you know that you need food, and you know that you need medicine. Is it really *you* that needs these things? What is your understanding?

(SN 15.9 The Discourse on the Stick): '*Anamataggoyam, bhikkhave, saṃsāro. pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsaratam*' – 'Bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving'.

Many people say, 'I need food, I need clothes, I need shelter, and I need medicine.' Are these really *their* needs? Are these really *your* needs? If you didn't have a body, would you need food? If you didn't have this body, would you need clothes? If you didn't have a body, would you need shelter? If you didn't have this body, would you need medicine? If not, are you striving to acquire these things for the sake of your life or for the sake of your body? Along the way to serve the body with food, clothes, shelter, and medicine, how many wrong actions have you done, all the while thinking that it is your needs that you are fulfilling? These needs are not yours; they are the needs of the body. If it is so, have you all been busy over many things for you or for your body? You know that it is not for you, it's just for your body. If this is so, are you the master of your body or a slave to it? You are your body's slave!

Indeed you are slaves – slaves of the body. If it is so, we can say that you are not spending your lifetime meaningfully. Your efforts amount to just being a slave to your body, doing this and that, wasting a lot of time, right up until you die. Almost everyone in the world is acting in this way, and so they die without having done what is really important and beneficial for their lives. Is this life? Is this the meaning of life? Is there something more we can do with our lives besides living just for food, clothing, shelter, and medicine? I don't mean you should stop doing everything; what I mean is that you can live with the right understanding that you are not working to acquire these things for yourself, but rather your actions are at the service of your body. Since you have body, you need to serve it and take care of it, but

not as though you were its slave, living merely to fulfil its needs. There are more important things to do with your life in the time that remains to you.

Not everyone becomes a doctor. In the same way, not everyone can be rich or successful. I want to share with all of you the Buddha's teaching on this matter. To be rich, we need two supports; one is from the past and the other is in the present. If there is enough accumulated wholesome kamma such as offerings in the past, you can be a rich man in this very life if you make an effort. If there is a lack of such kamma in the past, it is impossible to be a rich man in this very life no matter how hard you try. When past kamma gives its results, it is the main cause of what you experience in this life; present kamma is only the supporting cause. As I have told you, I don't mean you should stop everything. Try your best in your life to do what you can in a righteous way, and acquire and develop good habits. If you then become successful, it will be beneficial for you, provided you know how to make use of all your wealth. In other words, I want all of you to work towards what you really want to do in life while always trying your best to develop good habits that will follow you in your future existences. Students must make every effort to do their best in school. As adults, they need to work hard to do their best in whatever they do, too. This is the way to develop good habits that will continue into the future. Our efforts should be made with the understanding that we are not serving our own needs but rather the needs of the body. Now you know what you are living for. So the meaning of life is not just serving the needs of the body.

So to understand who you are and to be skillful in the habits of your own mind, your effort needs to be unflinching, starting from today. Do you really want to be skillful in the habits of your own mind? If it is so, from the time you wake up until you go to bed, while you are busy doing so many things, please always observe your mind, whatever you are doing.

Until now, you have never undertaken such an important responsibility as knowing your own mind, which is very important in one's life. There are so many things that are important to you, but I don't think they're really all that important. You are not doing what is really important for your life. You're doing what is not really important. You are spending a lot of time at unnecessary and unimportant things – things that won't make you mature, or make you grow up, but will only make you *grow old*.

Only when you become skillful will you know yourself. Only when you become skillful will you know what you are, where you are, and who you are. When you know who you are and where you are and what you are, you will arrive at the mental clarity needed to progress further and move on from where you are. If you don't know where you are standing now, you can't know in what further direction you need to go. That is why this is the journey we all need to make, a journey that we all need to start. For those who are going to start this journey, it is not too late; it is early. But those who are not going to start it until they die are passing their lives without giving thought to how they can benefit themselves. Now you all know that you are not skillful in reading the habits of your own minds, and that you

therefore don't know who you are. Do you know who you are?

All the people in the world, including all of you, are very interested in many external things. That is why you spend a lot of time trying to acquire all the things you are interested in, but all this effort gives you a heavy feeling. All the external things that interest you are making your life burdensome. The more you are interested in those interesting external things, the busier you will be. The greater your interest in external things like sensuality, and the more attention you devote to all kinds of sensuality, the busier you become. You spend a lot of energy, you spend a lot of time, and you spend a lot of money at it. To be able to spend money, you have to make money, and then you waste your money on things that only make you feel heavy again. True?

What are you doing as a human? You are weighing yourself down, carrying this and that, one thing after another, thinking that this is for your happiness. True? Are we happy because we have a lot of things, or are we happy because we know the value of contentment? Do you know the value of contentment?

Most people in the world don't know the value of contentment. They don't know the value of contentment because they are not skillful in the habits of their own minds. If they were skillful in the habits of their own minds, they would know what leads to happiness and what leads to unhappiness. We desire, we crave, and we want; the cause of these cravings is the defilements. They are the driving force that makes you feel heavy and busy. When you be-

come skillful in the habits of your own mind, which is always instructing you to do this and that, and when you know that the defilements are the cause of suffering, you will not listen to them. You will bring them under control. You will do what you really need to do in your life. You will not follow all the instructions that keep you busy all day long your whole life, and not only in this very life but also throughout the round of rebirths, the beginning of which is unknown and unknowable.

If you know the habits of your mind, and if you are skillful in them, you will know how to live peacefully, and you will know how to live a better life. You can make meaningful use of your life, and you will know how to guide your life in the right direction and not in the wrong one. You will reduce the number of things that make you busy, and instead you will free up your time to do what is really good, important, and necessary for you. As I have told all of you, when you become skillful, you will become aware of the value of contentment. The Buddha said, ‘*Santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanaṃ*’ – ‘Contentment is the greatest wealth.’²³ The greatest wealth is not the things you possess. The contentment you have developed is the greatest wealth.

²³ Dhp. 204:

Ārogyaparamā lābhā, santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanaṃ.

Vissāsaparamā ñāti, nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ.

Health is the greatest gift, Contentment the greatest wealth.

A trustworthy person is the best kinsman, Nibbāna the highest bliss.

To realise the importance of developing contentment, you need to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. People don't know how to lead a peaceful life, and think, 'This is my way of living; this is the way we live,' so they interfere with events and things around them. They get involved with the people and things and circumstances that surround them. They needlessly participate in all these things and engage with them. How do people interfere with what's around them? Do you think interfering that way leads to your happiness? Do you think needlessly participating and getting involved in pointless things leads to your happiness? It leads to unhappiness. Why do people get involved and interfere with what doesn't really concern them? Why do people participate in unnecessary things? Why do they do what they don't need to do? Because they are not skillful in the habits of their own minds. What causes them to spend their lives this way? The instructions of their minds make them act like this. Because you too are not skillful in the habits of your mind, you can't distinguish between what's really necessary and what's unnecessary either.

As you come to know your mind better and better, day by day, you will avoid unnecessary interference and needless participation and many extraneous involvements. Your many pointless involvements are due to the instructions of your mind. You complicate your life with your involvement in a lot of pointless things, and then you have no time left for what is truly important and necessary. Your lack of skill in the habits of your own mind is the cause of your entanglement with so many things. The Buddha said

that if you want to increase the good deeds in your life and lessen the unwholesome ones, you need to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. Now you understand that you need to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. Do you want to know how to be skillful in the habits of your own mind? I am bringing up this question here because I want to tell you. Now is the time.

Are you listening to my talk right now? Really? Is your mind thinking of something else? Yes, now is the time to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. Even when you are doing something, it appears as if you are doing that thing but your mind is not doing it. It often happens that even when you are sitting in meditation practice, your posture makes it look as though you are practising meditation, but your mind is not meditating. Why is that? The same is true of some of you right here, right now -- your posture makes it seem as though you are looking at me and listening to the Dhamma talk, but your minds are busy doing something else. What is the reason? It is because you are unmindful. If you want to be skillful in the habits of your own mind, you must be skillful and mindful. Mindfulness is a very important factor that you need to develop. Without mindfulness, it is impossible to be skillful in the habits of your mind; but with mindfulness, it is possible.

You need to make an appropriate payment. Not money, just mindfulness – nothing else. Mindfulness is the payment you need to make in order to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. So whatever you do, wherever you are, you should always be mindful

and observe your mind and notice your mind's instructions all the time.

You came here in your car, right? Most of you, anyway. As you drive your car, can you know your mind? While you are driving your car, your mind is not driving the car, right? Your mind is thinking this and thinking that, planning this and planning that. This is what I mean to say. Whatever you are doing, be mindful. When you are driving a car, your hands and feet are operating the car, and your mind is giving your body instructions to drive; but because of habit, because of practice – and as they say, practice makes perfect – driving your car becomes automatic. But because of the practice that 'makes perfect', your mind can do other things along with what you are doing physically, although you may be unaware of this. So starting from today, when you are driving your car, drive it! Rely on your skill and let your driving be automatic. I want you to develop another skill, that is, to be skillful in reading the habits of your own mind, even when you are driving a car. When you are driving, please look at your mind, please be aware of your mind, and please watch your mind and observe what it's telling you.

I am now telling you and explaining to all of you how to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. This means not just to be skillful, not just to know what the mind is telling you, but also to develop good states of mind almost all the time in your life. So when the mind is telling you to do something bad, or when the mind is thinking about something bad, at that time you must know that this is a danger. This is a danger, this is a fault. You are unaware

of the danger and the fault because you are not skillful in the habits of your own mind, so that, when the mind is doing something bad or thinking something bad, you continue in that mental direction without knowing that it is leading you into danger and to suffering in the woeful realms.

So when you know that the mind is doing something bad, you need to find out the reason it does so, and the reason is the application of the mind. Your mind attends to a certain object, which may be good, or it may be bad. Suppose it is bad; why does it continue, and why does it become stronger? The starting point is the same, whether good or bad, but suppose something bad appears in the mind; why does it become stronger? Because you participate in it. That is why it becomes stronger and stronger. How do you participate in it? You apply your mind to it, so it becomes stronger and stronger. Applying the mind to a certain object means participating in it. If you want to weaken it or stop it, you need to do one thing – you need to apply your mind to a good or wholesome object. If you keep on applying your mind to the former object which is bad, then the more you apply the mind, the stronger that unwholesome mental state becomes. Because of this reason, the unwholesome state of mind develops more and more. So when you know your mind is doing something bad, please make it a habit to change your mind and apply it to a different object that's wholesome.

Just knowing is not enough. When you know that your mind is doing something bad, you should then generate the intention to apply your mind to another

object that is wholesome instead. So you must find some object to which you can apply the mind easily. Perhaps you could take refuge in the Triple Gem – ‘*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.*’ Does this take very long to say? The time it takes to recite the Three Refuges is very short, but the words are very great. So whenever you know your mind is doing something that’s unbeneficial for you, change your mind at that time, and apply your mind to a wholesome object. This is something we need to train in; it will not happen by itself. If you are unmindful, it is impossible. If you are mindful, it is possible.

Another important thing is that you should ask yourself, ‘Should I try to make my mind be in a wholesome state almost all the time?’ You should ask yourself, ‘Am I someone who wants to cultivate good states of mind almost all the time in my life?’ Are you such a person? I believe you all want to be. If you don’t have this aspiration, it is very dangerous.

As you all know, our minds incline to do or to think bad things except when we are doing something good. For sure, if you are not doing good, your mind is doing bad. Even if you like whatever unwholesome thing your mind is doing, it is bad.

Do you know what is wholesome and what is unwholesome? Do you like dancing? Do you like singing? Do you like playing music? Do you like playing piano? Is it good because you like it? A few years ago, I put this question to one lady from Germany. I asked her, ‘Do you know the difference between

‘wholesome’ and ‘unwholesome?’ She could not give me an answer. So she thought for a while and answered, ‘I think I don’t know.’ Then I asked another question: ‘Do you like dancing?’ She said, ‘Of course, I like it very much, I dance a lot.’ Then I asked, ‘Do you like playing the piano?’ She said, ‘Yes, of course, I am very skillful at the piano.’ I questioned her further: ‘Do you think it is good to play the piano?’ She replied, ‘Yes, of course.’ I asked, ‘Why?’ The lady responded, ‘I like playing the piano very much, and I am very happy when I do it, so therefore it is good.’

Now you see, people think what they like is good. People think what they don’t like is bad. Maybe not all the time, but they certainly don’t want to do many of the things they don’t like. Conversely, they want to do the many different things they like. Because they don’t like something, they may also think it’s not very good.

So for the most part, people think that what they like is good. What they don’t like they consider bad. Actually, good or bad does not depend on your likes and dislikes. Something which is really good is good at all times, whether you like it or not. Something which is really bad is always bad whether you like it or whether you don’t like it. Wholesome and unwholesome do not depend on your likes and dislikes. Wholesome is wholesome all the time.

Whatever is blameworthy and the cause of suffering is unwholesome. Whatever is blamed by the wise but not by the fool is unwholesome. If it leads to suffering in the present and in the future, it is also un-

wholesome. When you crave something, do you have peace of mind while you're craving? But you crave all the time, one thing after another. You may even think you can be happy with what you crave. But if you observe your mind carefully, mindfully, and attentively, you know your mind has no calm, no peace when you crave something. Craving is not the cause of real happiness; instead, it is unwholesome happiness. There may very well be happiness in some unwholesome states of mind. When you are dancing, you may notice that you are happy. This is not *kusala* happiness, wholesome happiness; this is *akusala* happiness, unwholesome happiness – happiness associated with an *akusala* state of mind.

Do you know that, when I was a layman, I liked singing very much? Very, very much. Whenever I had time, I would sing. I came to know that this is just attachment. If I couldn't give up playing music and singing, for sure I would never be a monk. Why? Because I was very attached to music. If an attachment like this were the last object at our near-death moment, what sort of rebirth would we have? Would we be reborn in a good realm? No. You all know how attached people are to music. Almost all of you like music very much. This is because of your attachment. When you are skillful in reading the habits of your own mind, you see that when you want to play music or when you want to sing, your mind is telling you to do that. You crave it and hunger for it and long for it because you are being led by defilement, attachment, and craving, *taṇhā*. So the cause itself is unwholesome.

I don't mean you should never do things like this at all. Many activities of this sort are harmful neither to you nor to others. If it is so, you can balance your actions in your daily life. You do need to stop actions that can harm you and others and bring them under control. To be able to do so, you need to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. Singing will not harm others, nor will it harm you directly. It is not like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, or taking intoxicants, but it is nevertheless unwholesome. It is unwholesome from the ultimate point of view, which is the unwholesomeness that is unrelated to anyone in particular. It is not a powerful and strong unwholesomeness; but even though it is not very strong, it can lead you to rebirth in one of the four woeful states.

Something that is strongly imprinted on our life is something we do repeatedly, right? If we are very attached to something, we do it again and again. That repetition can be the cause of suffering at the near-death moment in this very life.

People display attachment to one another; this is the way people live. If you find that others are not attached to you, are you happy? You don't like it. You want those you love to show attachment to you, and if you don't see it, you complain.

What are people doing in the world? They are co-operating in doing bad, right? Co-operating. If they don't see this co-operation, they complain. In the same way, you are not doing what is good for your loved ones. Your loved ones are likewise not doing what is good for you. Yes, I must speak to all of you

from the ultimate point of view, from the Dhamma point of view, which is true all the time, whether you like it or whether you don't. I am a seeker of truth; I speak the truth. That is why I am telling all of you this. Only in this way can I make clear to all of you how to balance the way you are living. I will not approve what I shouldn't approve, but I will approve what I should approve.

So your entire life can be balanced when you are skillful in the habits of your own mind. In order to lead a better life and a peaceful life; to have more spare time; to do things which are more important; to refrain from interfering when you shouldn't interfere; to remain uninvolved with unnecessary things; to know who you are, what you are, where you are, and where you need to go next – for all these things, you need to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. As I have told all of you, when you are driving a car, observe your mind and what it's telling you, and watch what the mind is doing. If your mind is attending to something bad, something not good, something that leads to your suffering, at that time please change the object of the mind, and please apply your mind to a wholesome object instead. You need to train in this way all day long, whenever you're not sleeping, no matter what you're doing. When you are cooking, your hand does the cooking, but your mind is not doing the cooking. True? So you need to be skillful. At such times, recite, '*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.*' That's much better, isn't it? Yes, this is how I want all of you to train. Only then will your mind be calm, and your mindset will be a good state of mind which will be for your bene-

fit. At all times and in all activities, whether bodily or verbal, one thing you can do is to observe your mind.

So by training this way and observing your mind in this way from when you wake up in the morning till you go to bed at night, outside of the time you sleep, you will become skillful in the habits of your own mind. You will become aware of what constitutes your temperament. What is your temperament? Do you know?

Some people have an aversive temperament. Some people easily get angry. We say that such people are born with this aversive temperament. In some people, craving and attachment are very strong in comparison to other people, so they have a greedy temperament, and greed is predominant in them. Some people are very proud of themselves and easily feel proud of themselves, so they have this weakness. Some easily feel jealous, while others easily feel stingy; this is also due to their weakness, and also to their past kamma. So when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you become aware of what is predominant in you. The more you know your mind, the more you know your weaknesses. The more you know your weaknesses, the more you know your strong points, too.

No one is perfect, but there is good and bad in each of us. It is not true that some people are completely bad. It is not true that you are completely good. We all have both good and bad qualities. Previously, when you saw bad qualities in others, you would complain about them, you would blame them, or

you would find fault with them, and you would think to yourself, 'I am not like them; I am very good.' When you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, however, you come to know that you also have bad qualities, just like that person. The only difference is that someone else's weakness is greater than yours, or yours is greater than someone else's. You become aware of this fact, at which time you are no longer inclined to complain. We all have the same qualities, the only difference being their degree; some are strong, some are weak.

When you become aware of your weakness, you initially don't want to accept it. Instead you reject it, thinking, 'No, no. I am not such a person.' But the more you train your mind to be skillful in the habits of your own mind, the less you are able to deny your weakness. You have no choice but to admit, 'This is true, I have such and such a weakness,' until finally you accept the truth through your own observation and not because anyone else told you. This is not something anyone else can make you understand. I can point it out to you, but I can't make you understand it. You will understand it only when you see it for yourself.

Before you realise these things, you want to complain and find fault and make accusations when you see someone do something wrong. But when you know for yourself because you yourself have seen your own weaknesses and strengths, you accept yourself and also become skillful in the habits of the minds of others. You don't find fault as you did before, and instead you think, 'Oh, I too have bad qualities of that sort, but now I have improved, be-

cause I have become skillful in the habits of my own mind.’ So instead of complaining, finding fault, and accusing, you think, ‘If he comes to know as I know how to improve and train the mind, and if she comes to know as I know how to be skillful in the habits of one’s own mind, they too will improve.’ Instead of complaining or accusing, you will find the opportunity to give them suggestions. Your mind will have changed. Your way of living will have changed. Then you will know how to live peacefully.

So when you know your weaknesses or your dark side, you will know your bright side more and more too. As you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you can accept the areas you are weak in. You can accept the areas you are strong in too. What will you do? You will correct the places you are weak, and you will improve in the areas where you are good. In this way you will improve yourself more and more; you will correct yourself more and more. Seeing these things again and again, you will not just remain completely unchanged. You will change. Humans are intelligent, which means that those who want to be good, want to be so all the time, if possible. But because people don’t know the cause of doing good and the cause of doing bad, they are unsuccessful in their way of living. So when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you will correct yourself and improve.

What will happen when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind? You become skillful in the habit of others’ minds. Why? You used to do a certain bodily or verbal action because of mental actions. When you are skillful you can catch these

mental actions immediately. Then when someone else does something, you understand the cause of their action. So at such a time this understanding arises in your mind: 'It is not he or she that does these wrong actions. It is just the defilements that instruct him or her to do them.' At that time you can see that the cause of doing a certain action and the person doing the action are two separate things.

I will repeat some of what I said in my previous Dhamma talk here. It is not because we are born as humans that we become wise or foolish. It is because we can bring our defilements under control that we become wise, and it is because we can't bring our defilements under control that we become foolish. If it is so, what makes us foolish? Is it you, or is it the defilements? It's the defilements. That is why we have done and do and are going to do wrong things; it's not because of us, it's just because we don't have the skill to bring the defilements under control. What is the cause? It's not the person; it's the defilements. When we understand this through being skillful in the habits of our own mind, we can forgive others very easily. Is it good if we can forgive others easily? Yes. If we can't forgive others, who will suffer? So please don't do anything that will make you suffer. When you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you also become skillful in the habits of others' minds. You can accept their weaknesses because you have the same faults. Before you know your weakness, you think, 'I am very good; I am the best of all.' Yes, in some aspects you are superior to others, and yes, in some aspects you are better than they. But other people also have better qualities than you; for their part, they possess

some superior qualities too. When we become skillful in the habits of our own mind, we can accept the truth of these things.

Unless you are skillful in the habits of your own mind, you cannot accept the truth of these things. You reject the truth and hold on to untruth all the time. That is why people cannot actually work for their own good, even though they think they love themselves. If you are not skillful in the habits of your own mind, you cannot act in a way that agrees with how you think you love yourself. You cannot. Only when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind will you do what you should and listen as you should and ignore the instructions of the defilements which can endanger you. In this way people are genuinely able to love themselves only when they have become skillful in the habits of their own minds. When are you genuinely able to love yourself? Only when you have become skillful in the habits of your own mind. Only then will you truly be able to love yourself, and act in a way that agrees with how you think you love yourself. You can benefit a lot from observing your mind.

I will share with all of you that this is what I have done since I was in primary school, at a time when I didn't yet know the teaching of the Buddha. This was when I was in the fourth standard. At that time, an interest arose in me. I was very interested in my mind. I have acted accordingly since then. I have received a lot of benefit from this. So when I was ordained, I encountered this in the teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus, if you are not skillful in the habits of others' minds, be skillful in

the habits of your own minds, to do more good, and to avoid what is bad in your life.' How great! Very practical! This is something you all need to do. Even the young should and can do this. But only if you really want to do good for yourself. Now do you know how to be skillful in the habits of your own mind? I will explain a little more.

Why do we feel greedy? Why do we feel angry? Because we have anger, we feel angry sometimes; and because we have greed, we feel greedy sometimes. So are you angry with anyone now? Are you greedy for something now? Are you feeling proud of yourself? Are you feeling jealous towards someone? You may not be feeling any of these things right now. Yet even if you're not experiencing these feelings now, would you say that you have desire and greed? Yes, you do. Do you have aversion and anger? Yes. Do you have pride? Yes. Do you have jealousy? Yes. So if you have these defilements, can you hold them in your hands and show them to someone else? Or are they somewhere in your body? Can you point out where they are or where you have them? You know the defilements are with you and that you have them, but you can't show anyone where they are or point them out to someone else. Can you touch some place where they are? You can't do that either, yet you say you have these things. Yes, you have them, we all have them, but we can't touch some place where they are, we can't show anyone where they are, and we can't point them out to anyone. Although you have them, they are not like objects you possess or things you have. They are latent defilements. They lie hidden. They can come up to the surface of the mind only when conditions are met.

I will give you an example. When we see an object that is very beautiful, attractive, and desirable, what happens? Greed arises. Even though you can't say where the greed is and can't point it out or touch it, greed comes up to the surface and tells you, 'I want.' In the same way, when we have contact with an unattractive and undesirable object, the latent aversion rises to the surface of the mind. Aversion tells you, 'I don't want.' This is true of all the defilements. When the right conditions are present, the latent defilements surface in the mind and are no longer latent or hidden; they become manifest and active.

Please note that the greed says, 'I want.' Aversion tells you, 'I don't want.' I emphasise this point because I want all of you to know that the defilements are not yours. They arise simply due to causes and conditions. Who tells you 'I want'? The greed tells you 'I want,' but you say that *you* want. You yourself also say 'I want.' Both you and greed say 'I want.' One of you is wrong. Which one? Is greed wrong, or are you wrong? Greed has the nature of wanting. It wants, it desires, it craves. If it is so, are you the one who wants, or is it greed that wants? It is greed that wants, not you. The defilements are not yours. It is just because of personality view that you wrongly hold them to be yours. Don't hold the wrong view that they are yours. This is completely wrong view. They accompany us, but they are not ours. We all need to improve our point of view. On this point, I will give you an example.

When you see a mango seed, you know that one day it could grow into a mango tree and bear fruit. Do you see a tree and mango fruit in the mango seed?

You don't see them, but you know it could grow into a tree and bear fruit one day. 'One day' means only when the right conditions exist. If the right conditions are lacking, it cannot grow into a tree, nor can it bear fruit. What are the right conditions? Soil, sunlight, and water. The seed needs these conditions to grow into a tree and bear fruit. So if you put the seed on a table for three or four months, what will happen? It will dry out. After it dries out, you know that it can no longer grow into a tree and bear fruit.

You know it can grow into a tree and bear fruit, but you can't see where the tree or the mangoes are. But the seed has the potentiality to grow into a tree and bear fruit. When the right conditions arise, the seed's potential results in the growth of a tree and the production of fruit. Latent defilements have potentiality in the same way as the mango seed. When the right conditions arise, they result in growth and the production of fruit. What are these conditions?

Actually, because of sense contact with undesirable objects and the negative thinking that follows, anger that lies hidden comes up to the surface of the mind and functions according to its characteristics. So if you investigate, you come to conclude that anger is only doing its job, and that you yourself are not doing anything. You also see the cause of the arising of anger. If you don't participate in the anger, it will not become stronger. By observing in this way every day, morning and night, you come to know which defilement is strong in you, due to your past kamma, which influences you very much. You may notice the same thing among your family and friends.

Some are very angry; they have a strong tendency to become angry. This is due to the angry temperament that he or she accumulated in the past. We call it an aversive temperament. So some people become very attached to what they like because of their past kamma and because they feed that craving in the present and participate in it, so that it becomes stronger and stronger.

Let me ask you a question. Do you like unwholesome states of mind? You may answer me 'No', but why do people say, 'Don't touch me! Do you know how angry I am?' Why? The reason is that they are attached even to an unwholesome state of mind, because they are not skillful in the habits of their own minds. By observing how greed, anger, pride, and all the defilements arise and come up to the surface of the mind due to causes and conditions, you become aware that the defilements are merely the defilements. Anger has its own characteristics, and it functions in a certain way. Pride has different characteristics and functions in a different way. So you come to understand clearly that anger is not yours. By observing these things repeatedly for the rest of your life, you will come to know who you are, what you are, what your weaknesses are, and what your strengths are, and then you can and will develop and improve.

The Buddha speaks about how these defilements are not yours in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta:

Volitional formations are non-self. For if, bhikkhus, volitional formations were self, these volitional formations would not lead

to affliction, and it would be possible to have it of volitional formations: ‘Let my volitional formations be thus; let my volitional formations not be thus.’ But because volitional formations are non-self, volitional formations lead to affliction, and it is not possible to have it of volitional formations: ‘Let my volitional formations be thus; let my volitional formations not be thus.’²⁴

When conditions are right, resentment arises in the mind. We cannot prevent it. Once it has arisen, we cannot get rid of it simply by an act of will. The same is true of attachment; it arises when the conditions are right, and we cannot get rid of it simply by saying, ‘May my mind be free from this attachment.’ You cannot control the defilements in this way; they are not yours. But you can alleviate the harmful effects of the manifested defilements by not fuelling them. Gradually, with training, even when you come into contact with undesirable objects, you would be able to prevent the manifestation of the latent defilements with the application of wise attention. Eventually, with further practice of the Dhamma, the defilements can be completely eliminated by the Path and Fruition Knowledges that arise in you when you realise the Dhamma.

People say ‘I am the master of my life’ when they get what they want. Are they a master or a slave? They are fulfilling the needs of their greed, thinking that they are fulfilling their own needs. Right? So I don’t

²⁴ SN.III.1.6.7 Anattalakkhaṇasuttam (SN 22.59 The Discourse on Non-Self).

see people who are the masters of their lives; I see only slaves who are serving the needs of the defilements, one after another. Wrongly holding the view that 'I become a master because I can get what I want', they do no more than fulfil the demands of the greed that persistently commands them to pursue one thing after another, all the time, throughout the round of rebirths.

Now you see that if you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you can understand who it is that needs; you can know whether it's you who needs or the defilements that need. When you clearly understand, you won't allow yourself to crave all sorts of things, to cling to all sorts of things, or to want all sorts of things. You will allow yourself only what is really necessary. Is it good? Who is more peaceful, someone who pursues only what is really necessary, or someone who is driven by the instructions of the defilements and runs after all kinds of sensuality? The one who does only what is necessary is more peaceful. Restraint like this will come with the skill in reading the habits of your own mind, but for that a payment is necessary, and the payment is mindfulness.

If you are unmindful, don't expect to acquire such skill in your life. Don't expect to be able to benefit yourself. You can't really accomplish your own good. You will waste a lot of time doing what is not really for your benefit. You will waste not only time, but a lot of energy and money as well. So all these benefits arise when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind. Should this skill be acquired? Or should it not be acquired? Are you going to acquire

it, or are you not going to acquire it? This is your choice. But I believe you are going to do it. I encourage all of you to do so. It is really important. It is something we all need to do for the remainder of this life. If you haven't done it so far, it doesn't matter; let this be the starting point for doing so for the rest of your life.

So now you see that the cause of greed is an object that is beautiful, attractive, and desirable. But this isn't the only cause. In the case of the Arahants, who have removed all the defilements, even though they see some object that is very beautiful, attractive, and desirable, can it have any effect on them? It cannot influence them. It cannot shake their minds. Their minds are very stable, very pure, and have no impurity. The same object gives a different result. So the cause of greed is not the person; the cause is the defilements. So one cause is the desirable object, and another cause is unwise attention. How many causes are there at this point? There are two.

Let's consider another cause. If it is dark, can you see a desirable object? You can see such an object only when there is light. So light is another cause. If you are blind, can you see it? So another cause is eye-sensitivity. These are the conditions that cause the latent defilements that lie hidden to come up to the surface of the mind. You can't see the defilements because they lie hidden as latent tendencies. The craving and attachment come to the surface of the mind and tell you 'I want' only when all four of these conditions are met. At such a time you mistakenly say, 'I want.' These two 'I's' are the same in

terms of usage, but they differ in meaning and in what they refer to.

If we can replace one of the four causes, unwise attention, with wise attention, your mind will change. If you see a beautiful object, you recall the true nature of the human body and attentively regard the beautiful object as repulsive. But you have to practise this way beforehand, by directing your attention to the repulsiveness of a dead body. Then you must pay attention to it as 'repulsive, repulsive'. If you train your mind in this way, you can attain absorption concentration. So when you see a desirable object, and if you have trained in this practice, you can pay attention to that object as 'repulsive, repulsive'. At that time the four conditions are met, but a wholesome state of mind will arise. Now do you see? There is no person; there is only cause and effect. Only when these four conditions are met will you see the arising of this wholesome state of mind instead. Do you get it?

It is similar in the cases of hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching; each of these requires four conditions. So when you train yourself to be skillful in the habits of your own mind, day by day, mindfully, you come to understand that you are not the one who wants, you are not the one who craves, you are not the one who desires to possess. The craving itself is what craves. It is the craving that craves. It is the craving that wants. It is the craving that desires to possess. It is the craving, and not you, that wants to be with someone. You are not the one who wants, nor are you the one who feels attachment. Then if you practise more and more, and if you train more and more,

you will become more skillful when you are very mindful. At that time you can distinguish between 'defilements' and 'I'. You see that defilement is the cause of unwholesomeness. You are not the one who causes it. You see that the cause of doing good and bad is distinct from 'I'. You are not the one who does. You are not the doer; you are being instructed to do something. Actually, the defilements and unwise attention together are the cause of doing what is bad. Wise attention is the cause of doing what is good. By understanding these things, when you are mindful you will see that there is no self that is doing or acting. So along the course of your journey of self-discovery, you come to see that there is no self. You see non-self. But it is when you are mindful that you understand in this way. When you are unmindful, defilement and 'I' combine again. All ordinary people have this wrong view, which is called self-identity view or personality view (*sakkāya-ditṭhi* in Pāli). This means regarding anger as *my* anger, regarding greed as *my* greed, and so on. Ordinary people can't distinguish between defilement and 'I'. They see them as a single entity. This is due to self-identity view; but when you are skillful in the habits of your own mind, you become aware of the causes of doing what is wrong. If you don't participate with 'I' and 'my' view, whatever unwholesome state of mind you're experiencing stops right there. Once you start engaging in it, whatever it is becomes stronger because you are participating.

The Buddha spoke of the defilements as *raggāgi*, *dosāggi*, and *mohāggi* – the fire of lust, the fire of an-

ger, and the fire of delusion.²⁵ If you don't add fuel to a burning fire, what will happen? The fire will go out. But what will happen if you add more and more fuel? The fire will become stronger and stronger. In the same way, the anger that lies as a latent tendency comes up to the surface of the mind because of contact with an undesirable object. It is like a fire burning in your mind, the fire of anger. At that time, if you don't add fuel, it will go out by itself. What does it mean to add fuel? The fuel is 'I'-view and 'my'-view. If you participate by regarding the anger as *your* anger, as 'my anger', you are adding fuel to that fire, and it will become stronger and stronger. So you come to know the cause of strengthening the fire in your mind, and you become aware of the fuel, which is self-identity view, and you realise that if you don't add fuel, the fire will go out by itself. In this way you can lead a better life. You can make your mind more peaceful. If you become skillful, you can quickly stop it. But if you are not skillful, you think, 'This is my anger; I am the one who is angry.' In this way, you will add fuel to defilements due to wrong view, self-identity view.

Self-identity view makes you suffer more. So along the course of your journey of self-discovery, when you become aware that there is no self and you see non-self, you can live more peacefully. But you want to see your 'self', right?

When I started this Dhamma talk, you may have thought, 'Oh, how can I see myself?' By practising

²⁵ SN.VI.1.3.6 Ādittasuttam (SN 35.28 The Discourse on Burning, often called the Fire Sermon).

the three trainings – the training of morality, the training of concentration, and the training of insight – step by step, systematically, according to one’s past *pāramī* (spiritual perfection) and present effort, one can become a *Sotāpannā*, a Stream-Enterer, after having attained the first Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge.

The first Path Knowledge removes three fetters; do you remember what they are? Self-identity view, doubt, and attachment to wrong practices.²⁶ These three fetters are removed completely and without remainder by the first Path Knowledge. There is then no more self-identity view. But a *Sotāpannā* still has anger. The first Path Knowledge doesn’t remove anger, doesn’t remove greed, and doesn’t remove all delusion; it just removes a certain degree of delusion which prevents one from seeing the Four Noble Truths. But the *Sotāpannā* is no longer liable to suffer in the four woeful states. His anger cannot be the cause of suffering in the four woeful states because he has no self-identity view. He never regards anger as *his* anger. He never regards greed as *his* greed, delusion as *his* delusion, nor pride as *his* pride; he regards them as defilements. He cannot be the slave of defilement because he does not grasp at them with wrong view, with self-identity view.

Now you see that if you can reduce your ‘self’, you can be released from a great deal of your present suffering. Is it good to make a journey of self-less discovery? Now we should change the name of the talk to ‘A Journey of Self-Less Discovery’. So you

²⁶ *Silabbata-parāmāsa*. See footnote 12 on page 20.

can't escape your suffering by just being skillful. What do you need to do if you truly want to free yourself from suffering? You need to practise the three trainings systematically. Path Knowledge arises only with the maturing of insight knowledge. This dangerous wrong view, self-identity view, which is the cause of suffering in the four woeful states, is removed by the first Path Knowledge. This is the power of Path Knowledge. It arises in only a single mind moment but it is very powerful. There is no weapon which can cut through this wrong view; self-identity view can be destroyed only by Path Knowledge, which arises with the maturing of insight knowledge. How great Path Knowledge is! But do you think it is possible to attain such Path Knowledge in this very life? Yes, it is possible for those who follow and practise the true teaching of the Buddha, but not for those who don't follow and practise. I said 'the true teaching of the Buddha', not 'the untrue teaching of the Buddha'.

Now I say frankly to all of you, all over the world, there are many who teach meditation but who are not teaching the true teaching of the Buddha. There are many traditions which you like because you are happy with them. You may not like the true teaching of the Buddha because it is difficult. When you are going to practise the true teaching of the Buddha, never rely on your likes and dislikes. Practise according to the instructions of the Buddha, and in the end you will be really happy. You will attain real happiness. So never depend on your likes and dislikes. What is the cause of likes and dislikes? It is defilement. You want to be liberated from your defilement, but then you depend on your likes and dis-

A Journey of Self-Discovery

likes, so how can you be liberated? You direct yourself onto the wrong path when you depend on your likes and dislikes. This is not the way. Never have expectations along the way as you are practising. Expectation is not the way to success.

Now you all are making a journey to success in your life as a lay person. You may be successful in your business, but success is a journey, not a destination. If you succeed in your business, do you stop? No; you begin another journey to success. There is no end to it, because your actions are led by your defilements. Success in the Dhamma has an end, because it removes all defilement step by step and reduces your desire day by day, more and more. You will see the end where there is no desire, no craving. Which way are you following? Which way arrives at final success? The journey of the Dhamma is not like a journey of success in business. Please make a journey of Dhamma, which has an end.

So when you attain the first Path Knowledge, you remove self-identity view, and you become a self-less one. You become someone who is successful in the journey of self-less discovery. You will no longer be liable to suffer in the four woeful states. You develop unshakeable faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. From that time on you will always be a Noble Person, not only in this very life, but also in the future, wherever you are going to be reborn. Even if you don't know that you are a Noble One, you will never break the five precepts.

So I want all of you to start a journey of self-discovery. I want all of you to see that, even though

A Journey of Self-Discovery

you undertake a journey of self-discovery, what you will find is a journey of self-less discovery, which you make not just by observing your mind but by practising the three trainings.

May you be able to remove your 'self', which is the cause of suffering in the present and in the future.

May you all be successful in the journey of self-discovery, and may you all be able to successfully complete a journey of self-less discovery.

May you be able to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Question: Sometimes when mindfulness is continuous, there is a realisation of less of a sense of 'self', and you can see, that this is just thought, this is just feeling, this is my intention. But then when mindfulness is not so strong, there are times when there is a lot of identification with thoughts and feelings as *my* thoughts and feelings. Even though there is a little understanding that this is happening, that this is going on, and that this is because of a certain view that I have, the identification is still very strong. At that time, even if one wants to practise wise attention, it is difficult to practise it because of the distorted view that the mind already has. So what is Sayadaw's advice on this?

Answer: We cannot expect not to have such a mentality. Because we have defilements, we will experi-

ence this. When they come up to the surface of the mind, just accept them without participating. You need to train yourself not to participate, that is, you need to train yourself to accept them. When you are successful in the training of accepting without participating, you can live more peacefully, but to do so you must be mindful too. As you know, when you are unmindful, it is difficult. But even when you are mindful, it's still difficult if you don't know how to change your mind. Sometimes you may encounter difficulties too. So when they come up, you must train yourself not to participate in them if you know how. You need to train your mind to pay attention to another object, one that's wholesome, as quickly as possible. You need to choose an object to which your mind can easily pay attention. This is something all of us need to train in. When we become skillful, we can bring the defilements under control, but we can't expect to remove them just by being skillful. To remove them we need to practise the three trainings until we are successful.

Question: How can we make others, especially non-Buddhists, see the Truths, since we have different perspectives and views; and here we have to live together, so how can we lessen the problems that may occur?

Answer: If they want to know the truth, they need to train themselves to be skillful in the habits of their own minds. Only then will they become aware that there is no creator. Things happen according to cause and effect. If they are open-minded, it is very good for them. We should make suggestions to them without saying that this is the teaching of the Bud-

dha. Because all humans, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, have body and mind, they too have body and mind. If they want to live more peacefully, they should know their minds too. We can suggest to them to be skillful in reading the habits of their own minds. By doing so, they will come to know that there is no creator. But it depends on their willingness. We can't do anything if they are unwilling.

Question: What is the key difference between pāramī and normal good deeds? How can one turn good bodily, verbal, and mental deeds into pāramī?

Answer: Pāramī are noble qualities. When we are going to make an offering, at that time we can fulfil pāramī if we understand how to fulfil each pāramī. As you all know, whenever people do something, they usually expect something in return. Acting in this way is not the way to fulfil pāramī; it is just doing good deeds. It will be wholesome, but it will not be fulfilling pāramī. So if you make an offering with the wish that you will be able to make an end of suffering, you should make an aspiration by saying, 'May this offering be for the realisation of Nibbāna.' Your aspiration is for Nibbāna, where there is no trace of mentality and materiality, and where there is no sensuality. If you make such an aspiration for the realisation of Nibbāna when you make an offering, you are making an offering not to get anything but just to make an end of suffering. If you do so, it will be the way to fulfil pāramī.

Question: How can we differentiate the right teaching of the Buddha from wrong teaching? How can

we as Buddhists help in the propagation of the Dhamma?

Answer: The teaching of the Buddha consists of Suttanta, the Abhidhamma, and the Vinaya. These are the three Piṭaka, the three baskets of the teaching of the Buddha. Do you accept the Abhidhamma? If you don't accept the Abhidhamma, you cannot see the true teaching. It is only because of the Abhidhamma that we in a limited way understand that the Buddha is the Omniscient One. Only through learning the Abhidhamma will you know how great the knowledge of the Buddha is. But among people nowadays, including some Singaporeans as well as some other nationalities, there are some who accept the Abhidhamma and some who reject it. This is because of their teachers. Those teachers who do not accept the Abhidhamma teach their disciples that the Abhidhamma is not the teaching of the Buddha. Those who do not accept the commentaries teach their disciples that the commentaries are not the teaching of the Buddha. To speak frankly, if you read the teachings of the Buddha that have been translated into English, you will not find detailed instructions about how to practise. This would be suitable for those who could actually meet with the Buddha, because the Buddha is the Omniscient One, so He knew what to teach, how to teach, and to what extent to teach His disciples. The Omniscient Buddha knew what was needed. Those who met with Him had fulfilled pāramī while He was fulfilling His pāramī as a bodhisatta, a Buddha-to-be, over the course of many, many existences. The Buddha knew them well, and knew to what extent He needed to teach them because of His Omniscient

Knowledge. But the commentators knew that later generations, such as the people of our times, would not understand properly what the Buddha had said, so they wrote the commentaries for later generations and not for their own times.

In the time of the Buddha, some who approached the Buddha and heard the Dhamma right from the Buddha didn't understand it. Because the number of listeners was so great, those who didn't understand couldn't ask the Buddha their questions, so they would go to see Venerable Sāriputta, Venerable Mahākassapa and other Mahātheras to ask about the meaning of the teachings. Then those venerable ones would explain things in more detail. Their explanations, as well as some of Buddha's explanations that were not directly recorded in the Nikāyas, were handed down from one generation to the next. These form the basis for the commentaries, which were handed down as an oral tradition at first. The commentaries, together with the Vinaya, Suttanta, and Abhidhamma, were recited at the First Saṅgha Council headed by Venerable Mahākassapa, with recitations by Venerable Ānanda and Venerable Upāli, in the presence of 497 other Arahant Mahātheras. The Tipiṭaka and the commentaries were again recited at the Second and Third Saṅgha Councils. After the Third Saṅgha Council, these were taken to Sri Lanka by the Arahant Mahinda, still as an oral tradition. The oral commentaries were subsequently written down in Sri Lanka only when those who knew them saw that later generations did not have sufficient ability to memorise them. The commentaries were then written down in

Sinhalese. In the fifth century CE, Venerable Buddhaghosa compiled and consolidated the original commentaries and translated them into the Pāḷi language, the original language of Magadha used by the Buddha. This version of the commentaries as well as works by other commentators and sub-commentators were handed down from generation to generation up to the present day, thereby preserving the full body of knowledge of the True Teachings of the Buddha.

We know how to teach because of the explanations in the commentaries. To see ultimate mentality, we must know and see the mental process arising in a series of mind moments, with consciousness and all the associated mental factors present in each mind moment. In the Anupada Sutta from the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha,²⁷ it is mentioned that the mental formations in the first jhāna – the applied thought, the sustained thought, the rapture, the pleasure, and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; the zeal, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention – these mental formations were discerned by the Venerable Sāriputta one by one as they occurred. Why could the Venerable Sāriputta analyse each of them? This is not explained in the Pāḷi canon; it is explained only in the commentary to this sutta. It was not just because the Venerable Sāriputta had great wisdom that he could discern each of the mentality, but because he discerned the base

²⁷ MN.III.2.1 Anupadasuttam (MN 111 The Discourse on One by One As They Occurred).

and the object together²⁸ that he could discern the mentality one by one as they occurred. Following the explanation in the commentary, we are also teaching meditators to first discern the base and the object together. In doing so, they can see the mental process arising in a series of mind moments, and they can also analyse consciousness and all the associated mental factors present in each mind moment.

According to the Buddha's teaching, *nāma* arises in the form of mental cognitive processes, with many mind moments, which are followed by process-freed mind moments too. Cognitive processes and process-freed mentality (*vīthi* and *vīthi mutta*) were taught by the Buddha as *nāma*. Let me explain. Right now you are hearing my voice. As you hear my voice, the sound impinges on your ear-sensitivity at the same time that it impinges on your mind-door. Do you agree? It impinges on your mind-door too. To make you understand better, I will explain it more. When you were young, deluded by wrong view, you listened to music; you used to make the bass strong so the sound would be loud and pounding – boom...boom...boom. What happened at that time? Here (in the heart) you feel the boom...boom... boom, right? Yes. Thus a certain object, whether sensed by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body, when it impinges on the respective sense-door, that object also impinges on the mind-door. One object impinges on two doors at the same time. A visible object impinges on the eye-sensitivity and

²⁸ See commentary to MN.III.2.1 Anupadasuttam (MN 111 The Discourse on One by One As They Occurred): '*Vatthārammanānaṃ pariggahitatāya*'.

the mind-door at the same time. An audible object impinges on both the ear-sensitivity and the mind-door. The mind-door is called *bhavaṅga* in Pāḷi. The Buddha said that when those who are not deaf hear a sound, it impinges on the ear-sensitivity and on the mind-door, and they can perceive the ear-door cognitive processes which are arising and perishing rapidly many times over. They are very quick.

Without the help of the commentary explanations, we will not be able to teach meditators to know and see ultimate mentality as it really is. Without the help of the commentary explanations, we will be blind to the way of discerning ultimate truth. So please be aware of that. Therefore, the explanations of the commentaries are the reason that we know how to teach; the commentaries explain step by step how to practise. So if you want to learn the true teaching of the Buddha, you must follow those who accept the teaching of the Buddha as it is found in the Pāḷi commentaries and the Abhidhamma. Those who don't accept the commentaries translate the texts the way they understand them, so they are actually writing their own modern-day commentaries. Whose commentaries are more reliable, the commentaries of those who knew the intended meaning of the Buddha, or the commentaries of modern-day teachers? But even this is not enough.

Those who accept the commentaries and the Abhidhamma do not necessarily follow the teachings found there either; they follow their own traditions and their teachers' traditions. This is also bad. If those traditions are not in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha, we should not follow those

either; but if a teaching or tradition is in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha, whatever tradition it is, it is okay. I can speak only in a general way. You need to take the time to know the truth.

As for how Buddhists can help in the propagation of the Dhamma, if you can support the true teaching of the Buddha and those who are disseminating the true teaching of the Buddha, you are supporting the work of propagation. But initially none of us knows who is doing the propagation work rightly. It doesn't matter. If you respect someone, you should support them; from our respect a wholesome state of mind may arise. But along the way you need to observe whether their teaching is in accordance with the true teaching of the Buddha. You need to depend not on the person but on the Dhamma, but for the most part people depend on the person and not on the Dhamma. People quarrel with one another because they depend on the person. If everyone depended on the Dhamma, there would not be any quarrelling. So please distinguish between the person and the Dhamma, and study and follow the Dhamma, not the person. If I am not teaching the Dhamma, please do not follow; it is dangerous for you. If I am teaching the Dhamma, please follow the Dhamma and not me. This is important.

Question: I recently joined a running event that involves running through a forest. It is organised by a group that is trying to do good by raising awareness to preserve the forest. But after I signed up, the thought came to my mind that during the run we would actually be squashing and killing the worms and insects in the forest, so in a way we would be

causing more damage. So although the run is for a good cause, now that the thought has come to my mind that I might be squashing the insects and the living creatures in the forest, should I therefore withdraw from the run?

Answer: The Buddha said, ‘*Cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vādāmi*’ – ‘I declare, O monks, volition is kamma.’²⁹ If you are going to do something, you need to observe your mind to see whether you have a good intention or not. If we have good intentions, and if we have no bad intentions, it would be all right. Anyway, if we really know that something we are going to do will result in the suffering of others, it’s better not to do it. If we have doubts only after doing it – for instance, you suspect that you might have done something bad to other beings – but you had no evil intention while doing the action, you should not have any bad thoughts in your mind, because at the time you were doing what you did, you were doing it with a wholesome mind, and you had no bad intention.

²⁹ AN.VI.2.6.9 Nibbedhikasuttaṃ (AN 6.63 The Discourse on Penetration).

BASED ON THE TALK

The Highest Art

I am glad to meet with all of you again, my old and new friends. Tonight I am going to give a talk which you have never heard before. The name of the talk is 'The Highest Art'. Are you interested in arts? Do you know what an art is? In the dictionary, the term 'art' is explained and defined.

An art is defined as the use of imagination to express ideas or feelings, particularly in painting, drawing, sculpting, carving, and making pottery. So you know painting is an art, drawing is an art, sculpture is an art, dancing is an art, carving is an art, pottery is an art, and even healing is called an art. Do you agree? Another definition of an art is the skill of creating an object, such as a painting, a drawing, a sculpture, or a piece of pottery. Do I need to explain the meaning of pottery?

There are two meanings of pottery. The first defines pottery as the pots, dishes, plates, jars, flower vases,

The Highest Art

water bottles, and so forth that are made with clay and baked in an oven, especially objects such as these that are made by hand. Another meaning of pottery is the skill of making pots, dishes, and so on

from clay, especially by hand. Here I want to share with all of you why I want to give this talk tonight.

Just two months ago I came back from abroad. I was conducting a short meditation retreat. When the retreat was over, a disciple of mine arranged for me to visit the house of a potter. The reason they arranged for me to visit there was that even the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw³⁰ had visited this potter when the Sayadaw went to this country, as had other senior Sayadaws from Pa-Auk when they went there. So after the retreat was over they arranged for me to visit this potter while I was there too.

I had never before in my life been in the presence of a potter and seen how he makes pots and dishes and so on. So I slept at the potter's house for one night. I wanted to see how he made his pottery, and fortunately he asked me, 'Bhante, would you like to see how I make pots, dishes, plates, bowls, jars, and so on?' I answered, 'Oh, of course, I would very much like to see.'

Before he showed me his work, we visited a Mahāyāna monastery. It is well known to many people. So my disciple arranged for me to visit there, because the architecture at that monastery is very

³⁰ The Abbot of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in Mawlamyine, Myanmar.

The Highest Art

good, and my disciples wanted me to see it. So accompanied by the potter, I went with interest to see the monastery and its architecture. While we looked around, the potter was not following very close to me. He accompanied our group but was always at a slight distance from me. I didn't know that he was even aware of me, but he was watching what I was doing. After we returned to his home from the monastery, he started to make his pottery.

In just a few minutes he could turn out finished plates, bowls, and jars. He was very skillful and had a great deal of artistic talent. He considered what he did as great art, and thought of himself as an artist. He was doing artistic work. It interested me greatly.

Do you know how pottery is made? Have you ever seen a potter at work? Many of us have never seen that, right? When a potter is going to make pots, dishes, plates, bowls, jars, water bottles, flower vases, and different types of pots and dishes, he uses a potter's wheel. Have you ever seen a potter's wheel? It's a piece of equipment consisting of a flat tray that turns around, and the potter puts the wet clay on this wheel in order to shape it into pots, dishes, and so on. So while the wheel rotates rapidly, the potter presses the clay, squeezes it, and pulls the ball of wet clay gently upward and outward into a hollow shape, into the shape he wants. It's very artistic. All ten of his fingers are working together. He forms the clay into whatever shapes he wants by squeezing, pressing, and pulling the clay outward and inward and

upward. Very artistic. My *kappiya*³¹ translated what the potter said as he worked; he told me, ‘Whenever I work the clay, I consider that I am just a beginner, and that I just started that day.’ He had been doing pottery for over thirty years already. Yet whenever he worked at his art, he considered that he was just a beginner. And he spoke about his attitude towards the actual work, saying, ‘I don’t know beforehand when I am going to stop; only when I reach a certain point and think, “That’s good enough,” only then do I stop. So I end up with different vessels, whether pots, jars, or dishes, in different forms and in many different styles.’

And then I saw that the Pa-Auk Sayadaw had written Pāli phrases on some of the objects the potter had made. One thing I remember that Sayadaw had written on one of the plates was, ‘*Dhamme hontu sagāraṇa*’ – ‘May all respect the Dhamma’. And then in my presence he made two plates, one medium and one big. He also made water bottles and jars, all very beautiful, and a bowl that I liked very much took him just a short time to fashion from a ball of wet clay by squeezing, pressing, and pulling outward, inward, upward, and downward with his ten fingers – really artistic. And then he made a request, saying, ‘Bhante, please inscribe a few words of Dhamma on these.’

³¹ Kappiya: An abbreviated form of the Pāli term ‘*kappiyakāraṇa*’. It refers to a person who makes things allowable for a bhikkhu to accept or use. He also supports a bhikkhu in keeping pure sīla and provides services for the bhikkhu.

The Highest Art

I wrote three sentences, but before I tell you what I wrote, I need to tell you what had happened earlier. After we had returned to the potter's home from the monastery, we asked him about his pottery and the way he worked. Because I also asked him about the architecture of the buildings at the Mahāyāna monastery, he unexpectedly told me that while I was looking at the buildings there, he had been watching what I was doing. He told me that he was afraid of how I might regard the material things I saw there. He thought that my mind might be very much inclined towards such material things. He said to me, 'Bhante, these things are nothing. The Dhamma inside your heart is superior to all of them.' My purpose in asking was one thing, but the way he was thinking was something else. I took his words to heart and pondered them in my mind, thinking, 'He thought that my mind took great delight in this material development. Now he is asking me to write some Dhamma words on the plates he made.' So I wrote three sentences. Do you want to know what I wrote?

Because he considered his work to be very great art and very artistic work, and because he was very proud of himself, I shared three sentences with him. The first one was, 'The highest art is knowing how to apply the Dhamma in life.' Just as he was engaging in an art, I related my sentence to his work, but related it back to the Dhamma. So he felt very happy. When he asked me to write words of Dhamma on his plates, he asked me to write in my own language, not in English; so I wrote it in my own language, but I translated it into English for him. He was very happy.

The Highest Art

The highest art is not any other art. The highest art is knowing how to apply Dhamma in life. Do you know how to apply Dhamma in your life? This is the purpose of sharing this Dhamma tonight.

I will explain more, after I have told all of you what I wrote in the second sentence. The second sentence was, 'Real beauty exists only in the Dhamma.' I told him, 'There is no beauty in those material things. Real beauty exists only in the Dhamma.' Do you see? Really? If it is so, I don't need to explain any further tonight. Real beauty exists only in the Dhamma.

And I wrote a third and final sentence, which was, 'May you be able to choose the path which has an end.' I wrote that because he never knew his end. He considered himself as a beginner whenever he did his work. In terms of skill, he was of course really skillful, but I wanted him to choose the path which has an end. Work such as the pottery he does is endless. What are you doing? You are also doing work which has no end, you are on the path which has no end. Right? Endless. You are making an endless journey in the round of rebirths, doing many things you are interested in, many things you like, and also many things you dislike. You do many things you love and many things you hate. Am I right? We do not only what we like, but also what we dislike. Not only do we do what we love, but also what we hate, because of our defilements. Our defilements are the cause of making an endless journey. Making pottery is an art, but there is no end to it. So I saw his happiness on hearing these Dhamma gifts.

The Highest Art

So the name of the talk tonight is ‘The Highest Art’. The highest art is knowing how to apply the Dhamma in life. We all need to know how to apply Dhamma in daily life. Earlier I shared with you the definition of an art. What is an art? It is the skill of doing something. If someone can make something that is beautiful and attractive, we can say that such doing is an art. Drawing is an art, if it is beautiful and attractive to people. In the same way, composing songs, drawing, sculpting, carving – each of these is an art. Something that can attract people’s minds and in which people can find beauty and that is related to drawing, painting, composing, carving, sculpting, pottery, and so on – these are all art.

Here I want to share further with all of you, but before I share, let me ask you a question. Things we see that are not attractive or not agreeable or not beautiful – can we call such things art? If for example music or a song isn’t performed harmoniously, would it be art? Art means doing something pleasant and agreeable, creating things that we would call art.

Let me ask you another question: Are there many people who know how to live in harmony with the circumstances of their lives? If there aren’t many such people, are there few? There are very few who know how to lead a life of peace and concord. This is because few people know how to apply Dhamma in their lives. The question of knowing how to apply Dhamma in life in a balanced way is a very broad and very deep issue. Out of so many things that I need to explain to you, I want all of you here to know the most important point is to know how we should apply Dhamma in our lives. This is the high-

The Highest Art

est art. So from among many points, the first point I want to share with all of you is acceptance. Acceptance is an art. Tonight I am going to explain the art of acceptance.

Do you know how to practise acceptance? If you don't know how to practise acceptance in your life, you can't live peacefully. You don't know how to live peacefully, happily, and without harming yourself and others. Acceptance is an art. We all need to develop the art of acceptance. It is one of the Dhammas that we need to apply in daily life. I can share this Dhamma because of the teachings of the Omniscient Buddha.

The Buddha practised the art of acceptance throughout His whole life. Are you aware of that? Have you ever thought about it? The Buddha practised the art of acceptance deeply, profoundly, and with Omniscient Knowledge. If someone complains about you, do you accept it? Instead, what do you do? You get very angry. You want to complain. You want to respond somehow, not for your own good or for the good of others, but for your own harm and the harm of others. This is because you don't know how to apply the Dhamma in your daily life. It is because you don't know how to accept all the things you encounter in life whether they are desirable or undesirable. The art of acceptance means accepting everything as it really is. How does one accept things? Do you remember the twelve unwholesome kammic results the Buddha endured, and that one of them was when the Buddha was accused by a very

charming lady named Ciñcamāṇavikā?³² Do you remember? I think I have shared with many of you the Buddha's twelve unwholesome kammic results. Not everyone here has heard about this. But I have explained all these when I visited South Korea and when I was at Pa-Auk too. The talks I gave on this topic were recorded. It would be good if you listened to them; you should hear them so as to be able to develop the art of acceptance for the rest of your life. The talks are about the undesirable things that even the Buddha encountered as an Omniscient One.

A Buddha is a Perfect One, with no defect or flaw whatsoever. He is perfect. But even that Perfect One met with both desirable and undesirable things. It is unavoidable. The Buddha taught over and over that nothing happens without causes; so whatever occurs, there is a cause. The Buddha was accused by a charming lady while He was expounding the Dhamma in the presence of King of Kosala and Visākhā. Do you know who Visākhā was? She was a great benefactor and supporter of the Buddha. It was also in the presence of Anāthapiṇḍika, another great supporter of the Buddha, as well as in the presence of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen. So that very charming lady, pretending that she was pregnant, entered the Dhamma hall and accused the Buddha, saying, 'Your voice is very sweet to all who hear you, you know how to enjoy the bliss of love, but you don't know how to acknowledge your responsibility. Now you see', she said, pointing at her protruding stomach, 'Now I am

³² Commentary to Dhṃ. 176 'Ciñcamāṇavikāvattu' (The Story of Ciñcamāṇavikā).

very close to giving birth. If you don't know how to take responsibility, you should tell your disciples, King Pasenadi of Kosala, Anāthapiṇḍika, and Visākhā, your great supporters, to care for me in my pregnancy.'

What did the Buddha say? The One who knew the law of kamma perfectly, the One who understood that nothing happens without causes, accepted her accusation without complaint, because He knew that He had accused others along the way, while He was fulfilling pāramī, especially when His wisdom was not yet mature. At a certain time, He had wrongly accused a virtuous one.

The Buddha understood that when the time is right, when kamma ripens, nobody can avoid it, so He accepted her accusation. So the Buddha said, 'My sister, you and I know well whether what you are saying now is right or wrong.' That wicked lady's character was influenced by her past habits. She had acted in this way in many of her past lives too. The Buddha knew that lady's temperament and character, and He was also aware of the ripening of His kamma. So that charming lady said, 'Yes, yes, you and I know well that I am pregnant.' So at that time, as the Buddha is a Fully Enlightened One, respected by humans, devas, and brahmās, the throne of the king of the devas grew hot. 'What has happened?' the king of the devas wondered. Then it appeared to his mind that an accusation had been made against the Buddha in the human realm. So the king of the devas sent four of his attendants to solve the problem, and everything was resolved. I will not explain in further detail.

The Highest Art

So the Buddha practised the art of acceptance. We all need to practise according to the principle that nothing happens without causes. The desirable and undesirable things that we have encountered from our youth until now have happened not because of anyone else but just because of us. '*Beh thu ma pyu, mi mi a mhu*' is a Myanmar saying that means, 'No one else did it; you yourself did it.' Do you understand? There is a similar expression in English that says, 'Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.' If you are accused by others, it is not because of them, it is just because of your kamma. I like this saying very much, so I apply it as much as I can. Don't you want to remember this sentence? It is our kamma; nobody else did it. When kamma ripens, someone *must* appear to accuse us, to complain, to find fault with us; nothing happens without causes. It's not something other people do; it's just that our kamma opens the door, our kamma gives rise to conditions, and our kamma makes someone appear. Since time and kamma had ripened, if it hadn't been that lady, then another lady must have appeared to accuse the Buddha, so the Buddha accepted it without complaint. He accepted that His kamma was ripening.

Now, the Buddha is a Perfect One. The heart of the Buddha at that time was completely blameless. All the actions of the Buddha were entirely without fault. So the accusation was not due to any unskillful action of body, speech, or mind on the part of the Buddha in His final lifetime; rather, it was wholly related to the kamma He had inherited from previous lifetimes. Therefore, we may sometimes need to distinguish the ripening of past kamma in regards to our friends, relatives, and loved ones, and be aware

The Highest Art

that their circumstances may be due not to their present mind but instead to the ripening of their past kamma. Their present mind may be quite admirable. At such a time, please don't abandon them. You should distinguish between their present mind and the ripening of their past kamma. In addition, you need to examine yourself. Think, 'Who am I? Should I really be complaining about my present kamma?' Suppose you come to know that you haven't done anything wrong. You have to conclude, 'Now I am experiencing this just because of the ripening of my past kamma.' At that time, please accept things, please welcome your experience without complaining. This is one of the ways we apply the skills of Dhamma in our lives.

Would you like to hear about this from another angle? This is something we need to practise mindfully. Whatever happens, even if someone praises you, you need to accept it, just as it is, and understand that it is your kamma ripening. Some circumstances arise because of our past kamma, and some arise because of present kamma.

In talking about kamma, we should consider two things, past kamma and present kamma. According to the teaching of the Buddha, if we see a certain result, past causes are its main cause, and present causes are its supporting cause. Consider someone who is successful. There are many who want to be successful and who try their best, but who nevertheless don't achieve the success they desire. What is the reason? To be a wealthy man, to be a successful person, to be a well-known person, there are causes. The main cause is past causes, the supporting cause

The Highest Art

is present causes. Without the main cause, which is past causes, no matter how hard you try in the present, you may not achieve your aim. You may survive, but things may not be the way you want, because you lack the necessary past main causes. So if you see someone who is successful and prosperous, please be accepting and don't feel jealous. Jealousy is due to not knowing how to apply Dhamma in daily life, not knowing how to practise the art of acceptance, and instead allowing oneself to feel jealous of others' success. So from today on, please be happy about the success of others. This is very important.

You have heard all these Dhamma teachings but you don't know how to apply them, because you don't know how to be accepting. All these good things will not happen automatically. Only by training, only by practice, and only by the art of mindful acceptance will you improve day by day.

We are tortured horribly by our foe, our enemy, the defilements. Do you get it? You are deeply influenced by your enemy, the defilements. I didn't say 'your friend', I said 'your enemy', but you make friends with your enemy all the time, right? But tonight, fortunately, you are making friends with your true friend. That is why you came here.

Have you noticed that the way you're always making friends with your enemy is the cause of your suffering? You make friends with the defilements all the time, but the defilements never treat you as a friend in return. They treat you as an enemy. Do you want to make friends with your enemy? If you insist on

befriending the defilements, you will never know how to apply Dhamma in your daily life. And you'll never know how to practise the art of acceptance.

Your defilements compel you not to accept wisely, but to reject unwisely, right? They're always barking at you, 'Do this, do that. Nothing is good, everything is bad.' So this is also something we all need to overcome, namely, our habit of listening to the instruction of the defilements. I shared this with all of you a few years ago, maybe. I need to repeat it today. Do you remember what I told you?

The Buddha said, 'If you are not skillful in the habits of others' minds, you should be skillful in the habits of your own mind'.³³ Have you been training to be skillful in the habits of your own mind since you heard these words from Venerable Revata a few years ago? I will repeat some of the questions I asked at that time. Is it possible to know another's mind? For those who train, it is possible to know the minds of others. The Buddha taught how to practise in order to be able to know the minds of others, not merely by absorption concentration, but by supernatural power. The Buddha taught the way of training that enables one to know the minds of others. Therefore it is not impossible. It is possible for someone who trains, but it is not an easy task.

³³ AN.X.2.1.1 Sacittasuttam (AN 10.51 The Discourse on One's Own Mind): '*No ce, bhikkhave, bhikkhu paracittapariyāyakusalo hoti, atha 'sacittapariyāyakusalo bhavissāmi'ti — evañhi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabbam'* – 'Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not skilled in the ways of others' minds [should train himself thus]: "I will be skilled in the ways of my own mind". It is in this way that you should train yourselves'.

The Highest Art

Another question that I asked was: Is it possible to know one's own mind? It is possible. Then is it easy to know one's own mind? No. Even knowing one's own mind is not an easy task. If you don't know the habits of your own mind, you don't know how to develop the art of acceptance. You will waste your precious time listening to your defilements and following their instructions, thereby harming yourself and others, because you don't know how to live your life peacefully since you are unskillful in the habits of your own mind. That is why the Buddha said, 'If you are not skillful in the habits of others' minds, you should be skillful in the habits of your own mind.'

All our lives, since our earliest days, we have done many things both good and bad, desirable and undesirable. We've done mostly what is undesirable and mostly what is bad because we obey the instructions of the defilements, though we think we are pursuing our own wants and desires, right? That is why we have done many bad things while thinking that we were accomplishing our own good, but actually we were obeying the instructions of the defilements. So to be able to develop the art of acceptance and practise it, we all need to be skillful in the habits of our own minds. Only when you come to know what the defilements are telling you and what the mind is telling you will you be capable of discerning what impulses to follow or not to follow.

Many people commit wrong bodily actions. Why? It is because they listen to and obey the instructions of the defilements. Why do people commit wrong verbal actions? Again, it is because they obey the in-

structions of the defilements. That is why you all need to train in this matter. In what way should you train? You need to train to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. How should you train? Do you remember what I have told all of you? I have explained this in two previous talks, in 'Freedom' and 'A Journey of Self-Discovery'. Have you heard 'A Journey of Self-Discovery'? I have explained it there.

So if you want to be skillful in the habits of your own mind, you need to start a journey, but not a journey that you make in your worldly life. You have made many journeys because of the instructions of your defilements. But you haven't yet started a journey of self-discovery. So you need to start such a journey, to be skillful in the habits of your own mind. When you examine your mind from morning till night to see what your mind is telling you, what instructions your defilements are giving you, what your enemy is telling you, and what you are always making friends with – if you examine the habits of your mind, and come to know what your defilements are telling you, then you will come to know your weaknesses, and you will come to know your strengths as well. So when you become skillful in the habits of your own mind, you know how to be more accepting in life.

Why do you feel angry? Or are you never angry with anyone, as if you have no anger? Because of anger, people say, 'I am angry.' Is it really true that *you* are angry? Are you the one who feels angry? If you think that *you* are angry, you will suffer. You don't know how to be accepting. You don't know how to live peacefully. You don't know how to make your mind

calm again. Consumed by anger, you feel exhausted. At that time your mind will become calm, but not because you know how to calm it. You feel angry, angry, angry, until finally you feel exhausted and give up. This is not the way to live peacefully. This is the way of accumulating defilements again and again, repeatedly and endlessly. You feel exhausted, so it stops for a while, and then it starts again. This is not the way to live peacefully. Living this way is not conducive to one's own good nor the good of others. This is simply disturbing oneself. That is why we need to make the mind calm as soon as possible, even though undesirable things occur in our mind. When you know that anger is not yours, only then can you calm your mind. If you think anger is yours, you will foster it, you will nourish it, and you will fuel it more and more. Don't you know that you're adding fuel all the time? That is why the Buddha spoke of *raggāgi*, *dosāggi*, and *mohāggi* – the fire of lust, the fire of anger, and the fire of delusion.³⁴

Fire burns because there is fuel on which it feeds. Fire goes out when the fuel has been consumed. But what happens if someone adds more fuel? The fire gets stronger and stronger. Do you know you are adding fuel to the fire of the defilements? When you feel angry, the anger is like a burning fire. If you don't add fuel to it, the anger will go out sooner or later; but if you keep on adding fuel, there will be no end. It will be an endless conflagration.

³⁴ SN.IV.1.3.6 Ādittasuttam (SN 35.28 The Discourse on Burning, often called the Fire Sermon).

The Highest Art

What does ‘adding fuel’ mean? If you think the anger is yours, you are adding fuel. If you hold the view that the anger is mine, the greed is mine, the lust is mine, the delusion is mine, and the jealousy, stinginess, and pride are mine, this is adding fuel to make the fire of those defilements stronger, and this becomes the cause of suffering in this very life and in the future too.

The explanation I’m giving my Dhamma brothers and sisters today is really a reminder, because I believe you understood my explanation when you heard it a few years ago. But over and over again, you fail to listen heedfully. You enjoy listening to the talks, and you make a start on your Dhamma journey, but after that when you go back to your home, you stop the Dhamma journey. Instead you resume the journey you’re familiar with. You go on like this endlessly. You enjoy this endless journey; you don’t want the journey that has an end. Everything I have shared with all of you is meant for you to undertake the journey that has an end. If you practise, you will draw nearer and nearer to the goal of the journey that has an end. But you prolong your journey and extend it. You undertake an endless journey, enjoying sensuality, making friends with your enemies, and obeying them.

I will explain from the intellectual point of view how to eradicate the wrong view you have so that you can actually put my explanation into practice. I will use words and explain it intellectually to all of you, but if you don’t actually practise what you hear, you will not understand. Many people say, ‘I know, but I don’t do.’ The wise say that such people really don’t

know. If they really knew, they would do. If they don't do, they don't yet know, even though they say, 'I know.' If they really know they will act accordingly. I want each of you to be someone who knows and who acts according to that knowledge. So to remind you, I will repeat what I have said previously, so that all of you may understand that the defilements are not yours.

In the case of the Noble Ones, starting from the first type of Noble Ones, a Stream-Enterer, a Sotāpannā, such Noble Ones clearly see that anger is not theirs, greed is not theirs, and pride is not theirs. They see these things as defilements. They don't fuel the fire of defilement. They perceive defilements as strangers, as outsiders, or as something alien to themselves.

In contrast, all ordinary people have personality view, or identity view (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*). It is a wrong view. Is your body really *your* body? No. But you regard it as yours. Because you have heard the Dhamma, you can provide the right answer. You have the right answer but you do not have right action.

So if you mindfully train yourself to be skillful in the habits of your mind, you will understand that the defilements are not yours. I will give you an example. You have known since you were very young that a mango seed can grow into a mango tree and bear fruits. Do you see a tree and mango fruits in the mango seed? You don't, but you know that if you plant the mango seed, it will grow into a tree and bear fruits one day. Why? Because there is the po-

The Highest Art

tentiality in it. You can't see this potentiality, you can't touch it, but you can understand it. But that potentiality can give its result only when the right conditions are met. If the right conditions are absent, it will not grow into a tree or bear fruit even though the seed has the potentiality to do so. The conditions are the cause of occurring. In the same way, it is not you feeling angry; it is conditions causing anger to appear. Neither the seed nor the potentiality makes a tree grow and bear fruit; only the right conditions cause the potentiality to result in the growth of a tree and the development of fruits.

So if you keep a mango seed on this table for four or five months, what will happen? It will dry out completely. Then even if you clear a bit of ground and plant the seed and water it and fertilise it, it isn't going to sprout. It cannot grow anymore, because there is no more potentiality in the dried out seed. In the same way, an Arahant has dried out the cause. Arahants have removed the cause. And if there is no cause, there will be no result. This is the way the Dhamma changes the individual's quality.

So now, you have that potentiality. What is it? Greed is the potentiality. Anger is the potentiality. Delusion is the potentiality. Stinginess, pride, jealousy -- all these are like the potentiality that exists in the mango seed. But they can grow only when they meet with the right conditions.

Are you feeling angry now? Are you free from anger? Please consider. Where is the anger? Is it yours? If it is yours, please show me where it is. It is not yours. You have anger, existing as a latent defilement

which lies hidden. You can't see it. You can't say where it is. But when the necessary conditions arise, the hidden defilement comes to the surface of the mind. So when you see a very desirable object, the greed whose location you don't know comes to the surface of the mind and tells you, 'I want this!' Who tells you that? The greed tells you that, but you say, 'I want this.' The two 'I's are not the same. The first 'I' is the greed. The second 'I' is you. Who wants? Who needs? The greed wants and needs.

Only when the right conditions are met does the greed that lies hidden in an unknown place come to the surface of the mind and give its instructions. This is its nature. The greed wants, the greed wants to possess, the greed desires, the greed attaches. This is its nature. According to its nature, it commands you. It tells you, 'My friend, I need this.' Then you say, 'I need this.' Do you need, or does the greed need? If you examine your mind, you come to know in the end that greed is your master and you are its slave.

People say, 'I am the master of my life' when they get what they want. But really, do they become a master or slave? You are now making an endless journey as a slave, not as a master. Now I am telling you the way to be a master. Which do you want? But you will again undertake an endless journey after you leave here, right? So please, please...we must patiently remind all of you.

So if you investigate, you see how these latent tendencies will come up to the surface of the mind, provided there are sufficient causes, and they will

The Highest Art

tell you what to do. But if you are not skillful in the habits of your own mind, you will wrongly think, 'I want.' When you maintain mindfulness in your daily life, day after day, from morning till night, and constantly examine your mind which listens to the instructions of the defilements, finally you will realise, 'Oh, this is not mine. I am just fulfilling the needs and the demands of the defilements.' At that time, when they come up to the surface of the mind, you can accept them without adding fuel, because you come to know that they rise to the surface of the mind according to their nature and instruct us what to do only when the right conditions are met.

Anger instructs us to commit violence. Greed instructs us to act according to its nature, that is, it commands us to possess. So when you are mindful, you accept the causes of unwholesomeness are all these impurities. And if you understand them more deeply, you will regard them as outsiders. It's as if someone else is doing bad things.

Do you like seeing someone who is very angry? For sure, you don't. So when you become skillful, you will look at your anger the way you look at someone else who is angry. At that time you don't want to add more fuel. You want to extinguish the anger as quickly as possible, according to your skill. At that time you can develop the art of acceptance with regard to your defilements and those of other people. So when you become skilful in the habits of your own mind, you become skillful in the habits of the minds of others too. You come to know about your weaknesses. You come to know about your dark

side. You come to know about your strengths. And you come to know about your bright side too.

When you first see your weakness, you don't want to accept it. You pretend that you're not like that. But when you examine yourself and listen to your mind, and you hear the instructions of the defilements again and again, you come to know that this truly is your weakness. So when you have seen this over and over, you can't deny it; you must accept it. When you know and see your weakness more and more, you will improve and move up to a higher level. When you see your bright side, you should promote it, you should make it stronger and brighter. By knowing, seeing, and understanding your strengths and weaknesses, you come to know yourself, and how you have strong points and weak points. So when you see the weaknesses of others, you understand the causes of all these weaknesses because you have examined yourself.

Previously, whenever you came face to face with the weakness of others, you would complain about them and find fault with them. When you become skillful, you will not be inclined to complain about others. You understand why they act as they do, and you see the cause of their wrong actions or their weaknesses. Instead of complaining, you can be accepting. You understand what the Buddha said, '*Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati*' – 'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises.'³⁵ You will think to yourself, 'If

³⁵ MN.I.4.8 Mahātaṇhāsankhayasuttam (MN 38 The Great Discourse on the Destruction of Craving).

The Highest Art

they don't train themselves to be skillful in the habits of their minds, they will be just as I myself was before.' So your ability to be accepting will have improved. So this is something in which all of you need to train. So, to be able to accept ourselves and others, we all need to be skillful in the habits of our own minds, so as to be able to accept things both desirable and undesirable. But in order to acquire such acceptance, we need to understand the law of kamma as deeply as we can.

Those who have a deep understanding of the law of kamma know how to accept things without complaint. Do you remember '*Beh thu ma pyu, mi mi a mhu*'? 'No one else did it; you yourself did it.' That is why worldly circumstances like praise and blame, fame and disrepute, and having many companions or no companions are all due to our kamma. No one else did it.

Now I will explain how to cultivate the art of acceptance from another point of view. This is something we all need to practise and train in. All these good things will not come into being automatically by themselves. We all need to make an effort, we all need to be mindful, and we all need to spend enough time; but the main thing is mindfulness and a willingness to practise. Another thing we need for developing the art of acceptance is the practise of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity towards both desirable and undesirable things. This is the way to develop the art of acceptance. So we all need to practise loving-kindness.

The Highest Art

What is loving-kindness? You may be thinking, 'Bhante, I know very well. I have a wife, or I have a husband, I love her or him very much, so I have mettā.' Is it true? No. This is attachment; this is not mettā. This is craving, this is clinging. Mettā is acting for the benefit of oneself and others. This is something you all need to know in general. We all need to apply mettā in our life; just that much in itself would be a work of art.

How do we practise mettā correctly in our daily life? We practise mettā in daily life by emulating the Buddha and acting for the benefit of others. A Buddha doesn't need to accomplish anything for His own good. The Buddha had done what He needed to do. He had done everything necessary. What He did after His Enlightenment was all for the good of others. But as for all of us, who haven't done what we should have done, we need to develop mettā for our own good and the good of others in a harmonious way.

Those who don't know how to apply mettā properly sometimes harm themselves as well as others. Mettā itself is not harmful to oneself or others; instead, it is beneficial for all beings. But not knowing the proper way to practise mettā, people harm themselves and others. Does it seem strange? Sometimes you think you are doing good but you do bad, because you don't know how to apply mettā in a proper way. So in order to know how to apply mettā in our daily life, and in order to apply Dhamma, and so practise the 'highest art', in daily life, we need to emulate the Buddha.

The Buddha worked for the good of many. How did He do so? Very early each morning, before dawn, He would survey the world with His 'Buddha eye'. The Buddha would see someone in this way and reflect, 'What should I do for the good of this person?' Since the Buddha could know the pāramī in an individual's mind, He would reflect and thereby directly know and see what He should do for the good of that person, and then the Buddha would go to find that person. No matter how far or how many miles away, the Buddha would go there for the good of that person. For example, the Buddha might know that a certain person would take refuge in the Triple Gem. Would the Buddha go just for that? Yes, just so that the person could take refuge in the Triple Gem. The Buddha would explain whatever Dhamma was suitable for him and would give him the opportunity to take refuge in the Triple Gem. After hearing the Dhamma, the person's mind would incline to take refuge in the Triple Gem.

Sometimes the Buddha saw a person who would take the five precepts. For that purpose the Buddha would go there, no matter how far it was. Then Buddha explained the Dhamma which was suitable for that person. Finally that person's mind would incline to take the five precepts, and he would have the opportunity to do so. Sometimes the Buddha saw a person who was about to attain first Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge. The Buddha would go there and expound the Dhamma so the person could hear the Dhamma that was suitable for him. After hearing the Dhamma, that person would attain first Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge.

Did the Buddha act according to His desire or according to others' capability? Do you understand the question? *Mettā* is acting for one's own good and the good of others, not according to what we want but according to others' capacity. Do you understand? Sometimes, what we want and what they are capable of are the same, and then we can act both according to our desire and according to their capability. But for the most part, people are convinced they are acting for the good of others while in reality their actions are very much determined by their own desire. They say, 'I am doing this for your benefit; please act according to my desire.' Is this *mettā* or is it *lobha*, greed? In such a case, you are not practising *mettā*; you are practising *lobha*. From your youth until now, you have not been practising *mettā*; instead, you have been practising *lobha*. In this way you harm both yourself and others.

If you compel them to do what you want them to do, and if they lack the capacity to do it, what happens? You become angry. This is not *mettā*. Whenever you intend to act for the good of others, please don't give much thought to what you yourself want. Please be a good observer first. Think, 'What should I do for him?' We have our youngsters, the younger generation -- our younger brothers and sisters, our daughters, our sons, our disciples, our students, our followers, and so on. When we intend to act for their benefit, we should be good observers, even though we can't know an individual's *pāramī* the way the Buddha could. We can consider, 'What does this person's mind incline to do? What is his capability? What is his skill? What is possible in this instance?' All these things need to be considered. If we lend

them a hand only after considering in this way, we will truly support them and provide for their benefit. Thus we become people who understand how to act for the good of others.

Suppose there is some sort of conflict between a son or a daughter and the parents. What might be the reason? Often it's because the parents want their child to do this or that, even though it's something the child cannot do. So the child doesn't comply. Then what happens? The parents reproach the child, saying, 'You are a bad child, you don't cooperate with my mettā!' So you all need to emulate the Buddha, because only in that way can you apply mettā in your life.

As I have told you, nothing happens without causes; so even though you have mettā, and even though you try to accomplish the good of others in whatever way you can, sometimes things will not go according to your mettā. Even though you want someone to succeed in something that they should be able to do, and then they nonetheless fail, at such a time you need to practise equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable.

Mettā without upekkhā – that is, mettā without equanimity towards desirable and undesirable things and circumstances – is conducive to suffering. So equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable means accepting what is possible. Here I will equate 'upekkhā' with 'acceptance'. Developing equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable is simply accepting what is possible, whether in the case of a thing or a circumstance or a

person. Even though in your loving-kindness you want things to be this way or that way, things may not always go according to your mettā. Even though what you would like is possible, and the capability exists, things may not unfold according to either possibility or capability but according to the law of kamma instead. That is why you need to develop equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable. That is why practising equanimity is the same as practising the art of acceptance. Do you get it? Without this you will suffer. So with mettā alone you will suffer. Mettā is not the cause of suffering, but you will suffer because you haven't developed equanimity, which is the art of acceptance.

Karuṇā is compassion towards suffering beings. Compassion should be developed. Why? When the wise see beings suffering, their minds tremble. Your mind trembles also when you see beings suffering. The wise want to help such beings to be free from their suffering. Even though they sometimes cannot help, they nevertheless want to help. This is the mindset of the wise with regard to suffering beings. But if you don't practise equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable, you will suffer due to your *karuṇā*. You should try to help in deeds, in words, or at least in intention. But sometimes you are unable to free beings from their suffering, however much you want to; at such a time you need to be accepting and to develop equanimity towards both the desirable and the undesirable. This is the art of acceptance.

Lastly, let's talk about *muditā*. This is appreciative joy, or feeling joy when someone else succeeds. This

is also the art of acceptance. But instead of practising the art of acceptance in the form of *muditā*, you become jealous because you don't give serious consideration to the law of *kamma*. As was said earlier, nothing happens without causes. Someone's success and their prosperity come about due to causes. When you see this, please change your attitude. Remember that nothing happens without causes. His success is due to his *kamma*. Her success is due to her *kamma*. My success is due to my *kamma*, and not to anyone or anything else. '*Beh thu ma pyu, mi mi a mhu*'. Do you remember? Likewise those who know how to apply appreciative joy in life know how to apply acceptance in life too. If you apply yourself to actually practising acceptance, it will be conducive to your happiness. If you actually practise, you will know how to live peacefully. If you actually practise, you will know how to live a better life. You will draw nearer and nearer to the goal that has an end. This is the way to make an end of suffering. So you are now on the way, on the journey that has an end. But you should also train yourself to know how to accept all the things you will encounter in life whether desirable or undesirable.

So now you see, real beauty exists only in the Dhamma. The highest art is knowing how to apply the Dhamma in daily life. So the path the potter chose is the path that has no end. The path you are treading now is also a path that has no end. Are you aware of this? If you become successful, is it an end? Whatever you want, and however much you succeed in obtaining what you want, your enemy will tell you to want something more and pursue something more again, endlessly, with no end. No end not only

The Highest Art

in this life but also in the round of rebirths. It is an endless journey. I want all of you to set out on the journey that has an end.

So may you all be able to practise the highest art, which is knowing how to apply the Dhamma in your daily life, and may you all be able to begin a journey which has an end in this very life.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Question: We know that the law of kamma is very complex. You mentioned just now that a wealthy man is successful mainly because of his past kamma. Recently I heard about a person who started up a business selling some sort of plastic products. It is very low-end work, yet now he has become quite wealthy. So this gives me the impression that it is more his present kamma that makes him so successful rather than his past kamma, because we don't know what his past kamma is.

Answer: Our understanding does not go beyond our capability. If someone is not hard working in the present, it is impossible for him to become successful – this is what we understand. But there are also many who work hard but fail to achieve the success they desire. There are many people who work much harder than those who are actually successful. What is the reason? We should go beyond our current limit of understanding. The knowledge about the law of kamma is the boundless knowledge of the Buddha.

The Buddha said that the main cause is the past cause, while the present cause is merely the supporting cause. However, even though there was past cause, are wealth and success possible if there is no present effort? In this way the past cause is the main cause, and the present cause is the supporting cause.

Question: All the Buddhas taught us that we must avoid evil, do good, and purify the mind. Why is avoiding evil mentioned first? I thought everyone likes to do dāna.

Answer: Yes. Avoid evil, do good, purify one's mind. This is the essence of the Teaching of the Buddhas.³⁶ We have heard that the way leading to Nibbāna is the Noble Eightfold Path. If we summarise the Noble Eightfold Path, we can summarise it into the three trainings: the training of morality, the training of concentration, and the training of insight.

So avoiding evil means practising the first training. If you practise morality by observing the five precepts, it means you are avoiding evil. As you are practising the training of morality, you are also doing good, but only partially, not yet perfectly. If you practise morality, you can do good in body and speech. You can't accomplish mental good yet. One who practises the five precepts purifies two of the three types of action, namely, bodily and verbal action.

³⁶ Dhṛ. 183: 'Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā, sacitta-pariyodapanam, etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ'.

You refrain from killing, but sometimes the desire to kill may arise in you. Even though you don't physically kill, the desire to do so is unavoidable. This can happen in those who are practising the first training. You don't steal but sometimes you want to steal. The desire may arise but you don't commit the bodily action, so you haven't broken the precept. So you can do two good actions out of the three. But to purify mental action you need to practise the second training, the training of concentration. If you can develop concentration, you will purify your mind temporarily. For those who can enter jhāna concentration for one hour, their mind is pure for one hour. If they enter jhāna concentration for two hours, their mind is pure for two hours. This mental purity is not permanent; it is only temporary. When they emerge from their concentration and their minds contact this object and that object unwisely, impurities may arise again.

So one should purify oneself. There are two types of purification; one is temporary purification and the other is complete and permanent purification. By practising the second training, the training of concentration, you can purify your mind temporarily. By practising the third training, the training of insight, you can purify your mind step by step; and when you attain successively up to the fourth Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, you achieve complete purification. Each Path Knowledge removes or weakens certain defilements step by step until finally all defilements are eradicated completely without remainder. This is the essence of the Teaching of the Buddhas.

The Highest Art

Now you can see the corresponding sequence and relationship among the three trainings and the three teachings of avoiding evil, doing good, and purifying one's mind. With the first training, the training of morality, one avoids evil actions and performs good bodily and verbal actions. Building on the foundation of the first training, one progresses to the second training of concentration. Here, in addition to previous accomplishments, one further performs good mental actions as well as the purification of mind, but only temporarily while one remains in absorption concentration. Finally, based on strong concentration, one embarks on the third training of insight, which culminates in the complete and permanent purification of the mind. At this stage, one is incapable of committing evil, performs goodness completely in all three actions of body, speech and mind, and possesses a perfectly pure mind. This is how the three trainings, systematically and in a gradual order, successively accomplish the three teachings to 'avoid evil, do good, and purify the mind.'

The Highest Art

The Three Teachings			The Three Trainings		
Avoid Evil			Training of Morality	Training of Concentration	Training of Insight
Do Good	Bodily				
	Verbal				
	Mental (Purify the Mind)	Temporarily			
		Permanently & Completely			

The corresponding sequence and relationship among the three trainings and the three teachings of avoiding evil, doing good, and purifying one's mind.

BASED ON THE TALK

For Those Who Want to See the Buddha

Today I am going to give a talk. The name of the talk is 'For Those Who Want to See the Buddha'. Do you want to see the Buddha? When you look at a statue of the Buddha, do you see the Buddha? You see an image of the Buddha, but you don't really see the Buddha. I want all of you to see the Buddha in this very life. Do you wish to see the Buddha in this very life? Do you really want to see the Buddha? Do you think it is possible to see the Buddha in this very life? Yes, it is true that we can see the Buddha even in this very life, if you are willing, and if you can spend enough time practising meditation. For that reason, I am going to share with all of you how you can see the Buddha.

When was the Buddha born? Or where was the Buddha born? In Nepal? No, the Buddha was born under the Bodhi Tree. But the bodhisatta, Prince Siddhattha, was born in Lumbinī, in Nepal. So you should understand the difference. The bodhisatta was born in Lumbinī, but the Buddha was born under the Bodhi Tree, after practising the Middle

Way. That is why it is not the body of the bodhisatta that is called the Buddha. The bodhisatta is the Buddha-to-be. At that time, he had the same body as when He attained Enlightenment. So the physical body is not the Buddha. If you see just the body of the Buddha, you don't see the Buddha. The bodhisatta became a Buddha only when He realised the Dhamma. The Dhamma represents the Buddha. The Buddha is not the physical body. That's why you couldn't see the Buddha just with your physical eyes even if you were to see the actual living Buddha.

Have you ever heard about a bhikkhu named Venerable Vakkali? So today you will know about him. I will tell you his story. Previously, Vakkali was a brahmin who stayed in Sāvatti. One day, when he saw the Buddha on His alms round, Vakkali was very amazed by the noble appearance of the Buddha. At that time, Vakkali felt so much love and respect for the Buddha that he asked to become a member of the Saṅgha so that he could be always close to the Buddha. The purpose of Vakkali's higher ordination was nothing more than to be near the Buddha all the time to gaze on Him, because the Buddha's radiant appearance was incomparable, matchless, and unsurpassed.

So, as a bhikkhu, Venerable Vakkali always wanted to be near the Buddha. He didn't care about his other duties as a bhikkhu, and he didn't even practise any meditation. The Buddha waited for his knowledge to ripen and said not a word. One day the Buddha perceived within Himself and thought, 'Now his knowledge has ripened.' So the Buddha

said to him, ‘My son Vakkali, there is no benefit for you in just being near me all the time, looking at my face. There is no benefit for you in just seeing this repulsive body.’ Do you agree that this body is repulsive? Yes, very repulsive. That is why the Buddha asked the Venerable Vakkali, ‘What is the benefit of seeing this repulsive body? Even though you see me, even though you follow my every step, you will not see me, you cannot see me.’ Then the Buddha continued, ‘*Yo kho, Vakkali, dhammam passati so mam passati; yo mam passati so dhammam passati*’ – ‘One who sees the Dhamma, sees me. One who sees me, sees the Dhamma’.³⁷ In other words, one who sees the Dhamma sees the Buddha. One who sees the Buddha sees the Dhamma.

Who sees the Buddha? The Venerable Vakkali did not see the Buddha; he saw only the outward appearance of the Buddha. He was in the very presence of the Buddha, yet the Buddha didn’t say to him, ‘You see the Buddha.’ The Buddha said, ‘One who sees the Dhamma, sees the Buddha.’ Who can see the Buddha? Whoever sees the Dhamma can see the Buddha. So whoever sees or penetrates the Dhamma sees the Buddha. You too can see the Buddha, because the Dhamma represents the Buddha. This is how it is possible to see the Buddha in this very life.

This passage from the Vakkali Sutta is explained in the commentary as follows: ‘*Yo kho, Vakkali, dhammanti idha bhagavā ‘dhammakāyo kho, mahārāja,*

³⁷ SN.III.1.9.5 Vakkalisuttam (SN 22.87 The Discourse Concerning Vakkali).

tathāgato'ti vuttaṃ dhammakāyataṃ dasseti. Navavidho hi lokuttaradhammo tathāgatassa kāyo nāma.' The word 'dhammakāyo' here means 'the body of the Dhamma'. 'Kāya' can also mean 'group' or 'collection' in addition to its usual meaning of 'body'; so 'dhammakāyo' refers to the group of dhamma which arose in the Buddha's mentality from the time He attained Full Enlightenment and became a Buddha. Here 'dhamma' refers particularly to '*navavidho lokuttaradhammo*' – the nine-fold (*navavidho*) supra-mundane Dhamma (*lokuttaradhammo*). What, then, is the Dhamma-body of the Buddha? It is the nine-fold supra-mundane Dhamma. '*Tathāgatassa kāyo nāma*' – they are 'indeed the body of the Tathāgata', of the Buddha. Do you know what are the nine lokuttaradhamma? I will enumerate them for all of you: the four levels of Path Knowledge – first, second, third, and fourth – together with their respective levels of Fruition Knowledge, and Nibbāna. These are the nine lokuttaradhamma. Do you know what is meant by Path Knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*) and Fruition Knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*)? Someone becomes a Noble person when he attains *magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa*. Therefore, only when we attain *magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa* do we see Nibbāna, and only at that time do we see the Buddha.

So if you want to see the Buddha, what do you need to see? You must see the Dhamma. What Dhamma do you need to see? What made the bodhisatta become an enlightened Buddha? What was the cause? What was the reason? It was the Dhamma that made Him a Buddha. What Dhamma made Him an enlightened Buddha? It was the Dhamma of the Four Noble Truths. Only after realising the Four Noble

Truths, one step after another, did He become an enlightened Buddha. Moreover, in the case of the Buddha, His Enlightenment was associated with Omniscient Knowledge. He attained the first Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, the second Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, the third Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, and the fourth Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge associated with Omniscient Knowledge. He became a Buddha. That is why the realisation of the Dhamma – the Dhamma here means the Four Noble Truths – is for Enlightenment. I want all of you to know that it is possible to attain Enlightenment in this very life just as the Buddha became enlightened. The important thing is to practise the way the Buddha taught.

What are the Four Noble Truths? They are the Noble Truths of Suffering, the Origin of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, and the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. So without having penetrated these Four Noble Truths, you can't be enlightened. You can't see the Dhamma. You can't see the Buddha either.

What is suffering? Can you tell me what suffering is? I hear someone say, 'Unsatisfactoriness.' Another answer? 'Attachment.' Attachment is the origin of suffering. So, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, also misery – many gave me these answers. But I want to quote the words of the Buddha: '*Samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*' – 'In brief, the five

clinging aggregates are suffering'.³⁸ Do you know the five clinging aggregates? They are the material aggregate, the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the volitional formations aggregate, and the consciousness aggregate. All these are the five clinging aggregates. In other words, the material aggregate is called *rūpa-khandha*, while the other four – the feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness aggregates – are called *nāma-khandha* (mental aggregates), so we can also say that *nāma* (mentality) and *rūpa* (materiality) are suffering. So to know and to see suffering, we need to know and to see *nāma* and *rūpa*.

When did our suffering start? According to the Buddha's teaching, our suffering in this life started at the very beginning, in our mothers' wombs. The beginning stage in the mother's womb, for all of us humans, is the beginning of suffering in this life. The five clinging aggregates had their beginning at that time. That is why it is the first arising of suffering in the present life. Do you think you can see that suffering? Possible, possible. I have been teaching meditation practice to foreigners for more than thirteen years. Under my guidance, meditators from different countries have penetrated the beginning of suffering in this life and have seen how it started in the womb. At the very beginning of this human life, in the womb, mentality and materiality arose. The human materiality which arises at that time is of only three types. I will talk about males. For those who are go-

³⁸ SN.V.12.2.1 Dhammacakkappavattanasuttam (SN 56.11 The Discourse on Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma).

ing to be reborn as males, three types of materiality will arise. What are they? One is body decade *kalāpa*³⁹, male sex decade *kalāpa*, and heart decade *kalāpa*. Three altogether. Materiality starts at the beginning of this life in the mother's womb. What differentiates females is the female sex decade *kalāpa* instead of the male sex decade *kalāpa*. As regards mentality, if you notice, you yourself have no difficulty smiling. Some find it very difficult to smile. They rarely smile. They were born without *pīti*. *Pīti* means 'joy'. Lacking *pīti*, they take conception in their mother's womb. So their mentality, if it is accompanied with *paññā*, wisdom, will comprise thirty-three mental formations. If their mentality arises with both *pīti* and *paññā*, all the mentality arising at the beginning of this life in the womb would consist of thirty-four mental formations. Do you think it is possible to see this? Yes! Many who practise under my guidance have penetrated these mentalities. Only when you know, only when you see ultimate mentality and materiality – only then will you understand what suffering is. But not only do you need to know this beginning stage of suffering; you need to know and understand present suffering too. Now also you have mentality and materiality. So you need to penetrate your mentality in the ultimate sense. You need to know, you need to see ultimate materiality too. Do you think you can see it? You may doubt that it is possible to know and to see such Dhamma. Such doubt is normal, and there is nothing wrong with any of you.

³⁹ *Kalāpa*: The smallest unit of materiality seen in conventional reality.

The Buddha said, ‘*Samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvētha. Samāhito, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*’.⁴⁰ Do you understand? ‘Bhikkhus, develop concentration. One who is concentrated knows and sees things as they really are.’ Who knows, who sees things as they really are? One who is concentrated knows and sees things as they really are. And the Buddha continued, ‘What are the things that one who is concentrated knows and sees as they really are?’ Nobody listening to the Buddha at that time could give an answer. The Dhamma was first proclaimed by the Buddha. Only the Buddha knew. So the Buddha answered His own question: ‘One who is concentrated knows and sees the Four Noble Truths.’ So if you want to know what suffering is; if you want to know the origin of suffering; if you want to know the cessation of suffering, Nibbāna; and if you want to know the way leading to Nibbāna, the Noble Eightfold Path, what do you need? Concentration.

Many may say, ‘It is impossible to see such ultimate mentality and materiality in this very life.’ What is the reason? They don’t listen to the Buddha. They don’t develop concentration. Yes, for them it is true that they can’t penetrate such ultimate mentality and materiality. The reason is that they have not developed concentration. Do you have faith in the Buddha? One who is concentrated knows and sees the Four Noble Truths. Suffering, which is the five clinging aggregates – in other words, ultimate mentality and materiality – can be penetrated by those

⁴⁰ SN.V.12.1.1 *Samādhisuttaṃ* (SN 56.1 the Discourse on Concentration, also known as the *Samādhi Sutta*).

who develop concentration, but not by those who do not develop concentration, according to the words of the Buddha. Are you someone who follows the words of the Buddha, or are you not?

Since we want to know and to see the Truths, I want to remind all of you about two things. The first one is *puggala*, the person; the next one is Dhamma, the Truth. The Dhamma was first penetrated by the Buddha. The Dhamma was then taught by the Buddha. The Dhamma is known to the world because of the Buddha. True? The Buddha and the Dhamma cannot be separated. But in the present day, we act as representatives of the Buddha in that we are persons, *puggala*, who disseminate the word of the Dhamma. Yet I will ask: Do people around the world nowadays depend more on the *puggala* or on the Dhamma? People depend more on the *puggala*. Yes, the Buddha is perfect and the Dhamma was first proclaimed by the Buddha; so if we depend on the Buddha it will not cause any problem, it will not cause any danger, and there will not be any mistake because He is the original teacher of the Dhamma in the present age. But those who are not perfect, who have not removed all the defilements, may change things according to their own ideas, according to their ego, and according to their feelings. I used to remind all my disciples that they should not depend on me. If I ever fail to speak in accordance with the Dhamma, please don't listen to my words at that time. Why? Because people for the most part attribute a great deal of respect to the *puggala*, and so they usually think that whatever the teacher says must be true. This is because they are too dependent on the person who is a teacher. Do

you agree? Yes. That is why I want to remind all of you: Please don't depend on the puggala; please depend on the Dhamma instead.

If you want to know and to see the Dhamma, and if you want to see the Buddha, you must follow the words of the Buddha. Only then can you know and see. It is possible. It is not impossible. But it is impossible for those who don't develop concentration. That is why concentration is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. Among the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, one is Right Concentration. So in many Nikāyas⁴¹ you find the Buddha asking, 'What is Right Concentration?' And the Buddha answers, 'First jhāna absorption concentration, second jhāna absorption concentration, third jhāna absorption concentration, and fourth jhāna absorption concentration are called Right Concentration'⁴². Do you think it is possible to develop jhāna absorption concentration in this very life? Possible. I've been teaching many meditators to do so. Possible. But you need to follow the words of the Buddha and devote enough time to developing concentration. You need to understand the value of spending time at it.

You have spent a lot of time, many years, to become

⁴¹ The Nikāyas are five collections of suttas that make up the Sutta Piṭaka, part of the Tipiṭaka, the canonical scriptures of Buddhism in the Pāli language.

⁴² Definitions of Right Concentration can be found in the following suttas: DN.II.9 Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ (DN 22 The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness), MN.III.4.11 Saccavibhaṅgasuttaṃ (MN 141 The Discourse on the Analysis of the Truths), and SN.V.1.1.9 Vibhaṅgasuttaṃ (SN 45.8 The Discourse on Analysis), among others.

an educated person. How many years have you spent at your education, to be an educated person? Fifteen? You have spent maybe fifteen years, sixteen years, or seventeen years to be an educated person, all the while making a lot of effort, spending your physical strength and your money, and so forth. Which is more profound – the worldly education we have received and the mundane knowledge we have acquired, or the Dhamma penetrated by the Buddha? Please consider. The Dhamma is deep. The Dhamma is profound. But many people, I notice, want to penetrate the Dhamma and realise the Dhamma within a short time. So they join a retreat for seven days with the thought that they will be enlightened in just one week. Please be aware: It is not enough! How many years do we need just to pass primary school? Without passing the first standard, the first class, we can't attend the second. To be a doctor or an engineer, we need to undertake a course of study and training. We need a systematic way of learning, step by step. Without the foundation, without the basic learning, we can't proceed to higher education. But when it comes to the Dhamma, some people think they can penetrate the Dhamma just by paying attention to the body without establishing the conditions for concentration, without any guidance, and without any systematic way of practising. Please be aware of this: It is impossible to know the Dhamma by practising like that. The Buddha penetrated the Dhamma and taught the Dhamma very deeply, systematically, and step by step. Just as we need to complete primary school, secondary school, high school, and university step by step, even so must we do with regard to

the teaching of the Buddha. We need to undertake the gradual training. The Buddha said, ‘Just as...the great ocean slants, slopes, and inclines gradually, not dropping off abruptly, so too, in this Dhamma and discipline, penetration to final knowledge occurs by gradual training, gradual activity, and gradual practice, not abruptly’.⁴³ The commentary further explains, ‘There is no penetration to Arahantship all at once (*ādito va*) like the hopping of a frog, without having fulfilled virtuous behaviour and so forth. One is able to attain Arahantship only after having fulfilled in due order (*paṭipāṭiyā*) virtuous behaviour, concentration, and wisdom.’⁴⁴ It’s really a gradual training: the training of morality, the training of concentration, and the training of insight. And that is a definite path for the realisation of the Dhamma, to see the Buddha.

So now, quoting the words of the Buddha, I have told all of you that those who want to know, those who want to see the Four Noble Truths all need to develop concentration. If you want to consider only the words of the Buddha, without referring to the explanation in the commentaries, you must develop first, second, third, and fourth jhāna. There is no other way. But if you want to consider the commentary explanation as well, you will find the same teaching: ‘Access concentration and absorption concentration are called Right Concentration’.⁴⁵ This is

⁴³ AN.VIII.1.2.9 Pahārādasuttam (AN 8.19 The Discourse Concerning Pahārāda).

⁴⁴ Commentary to AN.VII.1.2.9 Pahārādasuttam (AN 8.19 The Discourse Concerning Pahārāda).

⁴⁵ Vsm.II.18 (Path of Purification 2.18: ‘*Cittavisuddhi nāma saupacārā aṭṭha samāpattiyo*’ – ‘Purification of Consciousness

in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha taught three trainings. If we summarise the teachings of the Buddha, the Noble Eightfold Path is the way leading to Nibbāna. If we summarise the Noble Eightfold Path, we can summarise it into the three trainings: the training of morality, the training of concentration, and the training of insight. You know what the training of morality is. Laypersons practice by observing five, eight, or ten precepts. How many precepts are there for us who are ordained? Two hundred twenty-seven. Two hundred twenty-seven bhikkhus' rules need to be practised. This is the training of morality. When the Buddha taught the second training, the training of concentration, He taught forty different samatha meditation objects. Among those forty, thirty can be used to attain absorption jhāna concentration; the remaining ten can take the meditator only as far as access concentration. So we can say that the Buddha taught forty ways of practising samatha meditation, or we can say that the Buddha taught two types of concentration – absorption concentration and access concentration. So the commentator, referring to the teachings of the Buddha, points out that both access concentration and absorption concentration are called Right Concentration. This is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. But if we don't want to consider the commentary, then only absorption concentration can be called Right Concentration. In that case, you need to develop first, second, third, and fourth jhāna. There is no other option.

(Right Concentration) is namely, the eight attainments together with access concentration'.

So then, as I have told all of you: In brief, the five clinging aggregates are suffering. This is the First Noble Truth. The Buddha said that the entire universe is made up of very, very small particles. There are no men, there are no women, there are no trees, there are no cars, there are no buildings. There are only tiny particles comprising these things. If we speak about suffering, about the First Noble Truth, we can define suffering in two ways: as the five clinging aggregates or as mentality and materiality. As regards materiality, to see ultimate materiality, you need to see the individual phenomena that exist in the small particles. In the time of the Buddha, as I believe you all know, there were two kinds of meditators. One kind practised vipassanā - insight meditation - after developing jhāna absorption concentration. In Pāli this kind of meditator is called *samathayānika* – one who practises vipassanā after developing jhāna absorption concentration. The other type of meditator, the *suddhavipassanāyānika*, is one who practises vipassanā directly. Which do you want to be, one who practises vipassanā directly or one who practises vipassanā based on jhāna absorption concentration? Which is better? Do you like travelling in business class or economy class? For sure, if it is possible, we want to travel in business class. Practising vipassanā based on jhāna absorption concentration is like travelling in business class. Because of jhāna concentration, you feel very peaceful and calm, and your mind is very concentrated. That concentrated mind produces light. That light can penetrate your body. That light can see your heart. That light can see your lungs, your colon, your intestines, your liver, your spleen, your kidneys, your

bones, your bone marrow. Thirty-two parts of the body can be penetrated by the light of concentration that arises through developing concentration. You can see these things not only in yourself, but also in those who are sitting nearby. You can see the thirty-two parts of their bodies. That light is very powerful. People use X-rays to see the parts of the body, but even an X-ray is not perfectly clear. It can't detect the colours of the parts of the body. But with the light of concentration you can penetrate your body; you see the location, you see the form, you see the colour of each part. But this ability depends on the power of your concentration. Some see very clearly, while others do not see as clearly. It depends on one's concentration and the power of the light of concentration. This is what the Buddha taught. This is what you can penetrate if you listen to the words of the Buddha. You need to develop concentration. I will tell you about a disciple of mine who saw in this way, and what he reported to me one day. After he had practised discerning the thirty-two parts of the body internally and externally, I instructed him to discern all thirty-two parts as a whole. When he practised like this, he didn't see his body; he saw the thirty-two parts of the body sitting, just as a whole. I told him to discern externally (in the bodies of all others around him) the thirty-two parts of the body as a whole (not as individual parts). And then he should discern from near to far. He had done differently from how I had instructed him. He came to me one day and reported, 'Bhante, I am very fortunate.' I looked at him. What did he want to say? He repeated, 'Bhante, I am very fortunate.' Curious, I

looked at him. What was he going to say? He repeated again, ‘Bhante, I am very, very fortunate.’

So I prompted him, ‘Please, what do you want to say to me?’ He said, ‘Bhante, I have discerned the thirty-two parts of the body of my girlfriend. It was very, very, very repulsive. I am very fortunate that I didn’t marry her.’ So in this way you can reduce your attachment to your beloved ones. How good it is! Is it good? You suffer because of such attachment, right? If you can reduce that attachment, how fortunate you will be! This is the realisation of the truth which is covered and hidden by your skin. Our skin covers up the truth. Because of this reason, attachment to many things arises in our minds. This is a very fundamental understanding. Based on this understanding, you can practise to see the small particles that make up the bodies of both living things and non-living things.

So if you want to make your journey in saṃsāra, your Dhamma journey, as a business class traveller, you need to develop jhāna absorption concentration, and then you need to continue on to insight meditation. But those who want to make the Dhamma journey in economy class don’t need to develop jhāna absorption concentration. They can practise vipassanā directly. The difference between these types of meditators is that one practises vipassanā without developing absorption concentration, whereas the other practises vipassanā after having developed absorption concentration. When they practise vipassanā, their practice is the same. So when the Buddha taught the second training, the training of concentration, the Buddha taught forty

samatha meditation objects. When the Buddha taught vipassanā meditation - the training of insight - how many types of meditation objects did He teach? What are they? Is there anyone who can give me an answer? Today I want to make all your minds clear on these points. If you want to know the truth, you need to know what the Buddha taught. If you don't know what the Buddha taught, the way leading to Nibbāna, the way leading to see the Dhamma, you can't know, you can't see the Dhamma, nor can you know or see the Buddha.

When the Buddha taught the training of insight, He taught only two types of meditation. So I will quote the words from the commentary: '*Duvidhañhi kammaṭṭhānaṃ rūpakammaṭṭhānañca arūpakammaṭṭhānañca. Rūpapariggaho arūpapariggahotipi etadeva vuccati. tatha bhagavā rūpakammaṭṭhānaṃ kathento sañkhepa-manasikāravasena vā vitthāramanasikāravasena vā catudhātuvaṅvathānaṃ kathesi.*'⁴⁶ When the Buddha taught vipassanā, He taught two types of meditation: materiality meditation (*rūpakammaṭṭhānaṃ*) and mentality meditation (*nāmakammaṭṭhānaṃ*, which is another term for *arūpakammaṭṭhānaṃ*). Only two. I think now you are very clear. When the Buddha taught rūpa meditation, materiality meditation, He taught four elements meditation, in both a brief method and a detailed method. Do you know four elements meditation? Among the forty types of samatha meditation, one is four elements meditation. Four elements meditation qualifies as both samatha meditation and vipassanā meditation. When four elements medita-

⁴⁶ Commentary to MN.I.1.10 Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ (MN 10 The Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness).

tion is practised as samatha meditation, it can enable only access concentration but not absorption concentration. So when the Buddha taught the third training, the training of insight, He taught four elements meditation as a rūpa meditation, a materiality meditation.

So if you don't want to make your Dhamma journey in business class and are satisfied with just economy class instead, you don't need to develop absorption concentration, but you must undertake vipassanā with four elements meditation as your starting point. There is no other way. But those who want to make the Dhamma journey in business class need to develop absorption concentration. After that, if they want to start insight meditation, they can start from materiality meditation or mentality meditation. Because they have attained jhāna absorption concentration, they can discern the jhāna factors. 'Jhāna factors' means the dominant mental factors of the jhānas, of absorption concentration. Those who don't develop concentration beyond the level of access concentration have no jhāna concentration. That is why they can't start their insight meditation from mentality meditation. They must start from materiality meditation. But both types of meditators are the same when they practise vipassanā. Both need to practise mentality meditation or materiality meditation. So the only difference is whether their meditation is with or without absorption concentration. I believe you all have been practising meditation. I believe you all want to emphasise vipassanā meditation. Yet, even though you want to make your journey in business class, I see most of you travelling in economy class.

But if you want to make your Dhamma journey in economy class, it is also possible. Without developing absorption *jhāna* concentration, please start directly with four elements meditation and practise to know and to see ultimate materiality. Now, in this audience, there are some who have developed *jhāna* concentration; there are also some who want to practise *vipassanā* directly. So both of them are going to undertake *vipassanā*. Both of them need to practise four elements meditation. What are these four elements? The four elements are earth, water, fire, and wind. The earth element has six characteristics: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, and lightness – six characteristics altogether. The water element has two characteristics, flowing and cohesion. The characteristics of the fire element are heat and cold. The characteristics of the wind element are pushing and supporting. Altogether there are twelve characteristics. One practises four elements meditation by discerning these twelve characteristics, or discerning four elements, in your body systematically, one after another. So when you discern properly, you will see your concentration improve. When your concentration improves, you can remove the perception of being (*sattasaññā*). You don't see your body. You just feel or you just see the group of four elements. Your whole body changes into a block of four elements. Then if you continue discerning that block of four elements, you will see light emerge from your body, from the block of four elements. The colour of the light changes gradually from grey to white, until finally it becomes very bright. Your whole body becomes very bright. Your whole body becomes a block of bright light. So if

you can keep on discerning the four elements in that block of bright light for one hour, you can attain access concentration. At that point, if you continue discerning the four elements in that block of light, you will perceive your body as being composed of very small particles which are arising and perishing rapidly all the time. In Pāḷi these particles are called rūpa kalāpa.

Are you familiar with sub-atomic particles as they are known to contemporary science? According to modern physics, matter is made up of atoms, which in turn consist of three smaller sub-atomic particles, namely, protons, neutrons, and electrons. Yet these in turn consist of even smaller sub-atomic particles. The current scientific view in the twenty-first century is that the atom, which was formerly considered the smallest indivisible unit of matter, is now known to be made up of hundreds of smaller particles, and that many of these particles can hardly be said to exist, because they are so unstable that they last only a very short time, often less than a millionth of a second. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century that science discovered that the atom is not the smallest unit of matter and is instead made up of many very small particles. Scientists can know only this much, and only because they can detect these particles with the instruments they use in their research. They cannot see these particles directly with the naked eye, of course. And physicists are themselves aware that their knowledge is not yet complete.

Now, the small particles that the Buddha taught us to see, what we might tend to understand as sub-

atomic particles, are far more subtle than the particles that scientists can see. The knowing and seeing taught by the Buddha is deeper and more profound. It is not possible to see these small particles with the naked eye, but they can be seen with the light of concentration. The Buddha discerned that rūpa – matter, materiality – is made up of many extremely small particles. You can penetrate them with the light of your concentration too. Again, in Pāli these particles are called rūpa kalāpa. The Buddha saw for Himself that, within the time it takes to snap one's fingers, a vast number of rūpa kalāpas arise and perish millions of times over. This is what He taught 2600 years ago, and this is what we are still teaching today.

Although human scientific knowledge in this field is impressive, modern science has acquired this knowledge gradually in just the last hundred years or so, and only with the aid of sophisticated instruments, whereas the Buddha penetrated the nature of materiality in this way over 2600 years ago, and by no other means than His concentration and insight. Moreover, even though scientific knowledge reflects in part what the Buddha taught, it has not approached the depth or height of the Buddha's knowledge. I have had some disciples from Western countries who penetrated these small particles and analysed the ultimate materiality that exists in them. Afterwards they said, 'What scientists have seen is not yet correct. What they have seen is not perfect. What I can see under your guidance is more perfect.' Do you want to see too?

This is the knowledge of the Omniscient Buddha.

You will not come across the teaching on rūpa kalāpa in any Sutta. You won't read about it in any Nikāya. You will find this knowledge only in the Abhidhamma. I have heard that many have been misguided by some teachers who reject the Abhidhamma – who say that the Abhidhamma is not the teaching of the Buddha. However, it has been our experience that only when we study the Abhidhamma do we come to know that this is the teaching of an Omniscient Buddha. The knowledge from the Buddha's Omniscience can be imparted, just as we impart it to others, only by understanding the Abhidhamma. The knowledge of sub-atomic particles that science has acquired only recently and by means of instruments falls short of what was taught long ago regarding rūpa kalāpa by the Buddha in the Abhidhamma as the fruit of His own concentration and insight. Now we can teach such profound Dhamma because of the Abhidhamma. That is why I want to suggest to all of you not to look down on the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma is very, very important. Because of the Abhidhamma, because of the Paṭṭhāna,⁴⁷ we come to know that the Buddha was omniscient. The Buddha's knowledge is very deep. It is true all the time. It pertains to ultimate truth. It is true everywhere and applies to all things. It is timeless. It is always true. Suttanta was taught by the Buddha according to the condition of the hearers. But the Abhidhamma is not aimed at any specific being or beings. It expounds what is true

⁴⁷ The Paṭṭhāna (the name means 'origin' or 'cause') is the last and the largest of the seven books in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It deals deeply and profoundly with causality and conditional relations among all phenomena.

universally, for everything, for both living things and non-living things.

You will also find the teaching on rūpa kalāpa in the commentaries. Arūpa kalāpa, or nāma kalāpa, means the mentality group in each mind moment. This too is explained in the commentaries. Because of the help of commentaries, we know how to teach the Dhamma very deeply. Commentators are those who know. They don't use scientific instruments to compose the commentaries. They use their understanding. Thus by following their suggestions as they appear in the commentaries, we can teach meditators to know the kalāpas.

So when a meditator can see these small particles, we let the meditator analyse them to see the ultimate materiality that exists in each particle. The small particles are not the ultimate materiality. The small particles which are arising and perishing rapidly all the time are just the smallest unit of materiality seen in conventional reality, and not yet the ultimate truth. In each kalāpa, there exist eight, nine, or ten types of ultimate materiality. They may include: earth, water, fire, wind, colour, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life faculty, five types of sensitivity, and so forth. At least eight, or nine, or sometimes as many as ten. You can penetrate them with the help of the light of concentration. So when you know, when you see these small particles, and when you can analyse the ultimate materiality that exists in them, at that time you will agree with the Buddha that there are no men, there are no women. Everywhere you look – everywhere, if you pay attention to the four elements – everything becomes the same. It is all just the arising

ing and perishing of small particles. You don't see living things, you don't see non-living things. Everything becomes just very tiny particles arising and perishing. They are not unlike the sub-atomic particles that scientists describe as being so unstable that they last only a very short time, often less than a millionth of a second. But discerning ultimate materiality, which is a deeper and truer knowledge, is the knowledge of the Buddha. If you see this, you start to see the Buddha. You'll say to yourself, 'Oh, the Buddha has penetrated this truth. Now I penetrate it just as the Buddha penetrated it.'

How about mentality? From where does mentality arise? Can you tell me? Today many things in this talk are new to you. Scientists say mentality arises in the brain. The Buddha says it arises in the heart. Which is true? You can analyse practically and see which is true. Mentality arises dependent on heart-base materiality. Do you believe this? Do you believe that mentality arises dependent on heart-base materiality? Okay, I will help you figure it out. When you feel happy, where do you feel the happiness, in your brain or in your heart? When you feel angry, where do you feel the anger? You feel these things in your heart. When you feel proud of yourself, where do you feel the pride? In your heart. Now you see that mentality arises in the heart. When meditators have penetrated ultimate mentality, we let them check to see whether they can find any trace of mentality in the brain. When they discern the four elements in their brain, they see just the arising and perishing of very tiny kalāpas. There is no trace of mentality in the brain. This is something you can verify for yourself. This is what you can do practically. The Bud-

dha said, ‘Come and see; the wise can know, the wise can see’.⁴⁸ This is not theoretical. This is what you can do practically.

At that time you will know that mentality arises in the form of cognitive processes. In one process there are many mind moments. In each mind moment there is consciousness together with its associated mental factors. You need to analyse this too.

So when you know and see such Dhamma, you need to go on from there to know and see the Second Noble Truth. In other words, when you come to know ultimate mentality and materiality, you know and see the First Noble Truth. You penetrate the nature of suffering. What is the cause of the First Noble Truth? The Second Noble Truth is the cause of suffering. Therefore we need to know and to see the cause of suffering. As I have told all of you, the beginning of suffering in this very life started in our mother’s womb. The beginning of this life is the beginning of mentality and materiality in our mother’s womb. So where should we look to find the origin of this suffering? Where would it be? It will be found even before that. To know and to see the Second Noble Truth, the origin of suffering, the cause of suffering, you need to pay attention to your past; you need to discern your past lives. Do you think it is possible?

The central teaching of the Buddha is the law of

⁴⁸ See DN.II.5 Janavasabhasuttam (DN 18.27 The Discourse Concerning Janavasabha), among others: ‘*Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*’.

kamma, and the necessity of understanding the law of kamma. Now you believe good begets good, bad begets bad; but you believe this just through hearing, not through your direct knowledge. Only when you achieve direct knowledge will you really understand how kamma works.

So we are teaching this to many meditators, both from here and from abroad. When they have come to know and see ultimate mentality and materiality, they are instructed to know and to see the cause of suffering. Thus they are taught to discern their past. But some people say that the Buddha never taught vipassanā for the purpose of discerning and contemplating the past. But in the Saṃyutta Nikāya there is a sutta called the Kajjhanīya Sutta. There the Buddha says that there are Brahmins and monks who can recollect their past, not with supernatural power, but with insight knowledge.⁴⁹ With supernatural power, you can know your past existences in detail. You can know your name, you can know your relatives, you can know your occupation, you can know where you lived, you can know when you died and at what age, and so forth. All those details can be penetrated by those who have attained supernatural power. Do you think it is just something written in a book? No. It is possible to practise for the attainment of supernatural power in this very life. Possible. One can attain supernormal abilities such as *pubbenivāsānussati*, the recollection of past lives. There have always been, and there still are today, meditators who can discern their past lives in the

⁴⁹ SN.III.1.8.7 Khajjanīyasuttaṃ (SN 22.79 The Discourse on Being Devoured).

hundreds – one hundred, two hundred, three hundred previous existences. They could and can see them as if they were watching a movie. They can discern their past lives one after another, and can recall their name, clan, occupation, the ups and downs of their lives, the age they died, where they lived, what country they lived in, and so on. They can penetrate these things through supernatural power. Based on jhāna concentration, they practise. That is why such a thing is possible. If you want to practise, it is possible. But the attainment of supernatural powers is not for all, but only for very few people. Fewer than one in a thousand may attain it. Even fewer than one in ten thousand may attain it. Still, supernormal powers are indeed attainable, so you also can practise to attain them in this very life under the guidance of qualified teachers.

But in the Khajjanīya Sutta, the Buddha explains that some meditators discern their past lives by insight knowledge, *vipassanāñāna*. What do they see? The objects which they see in their past lives are the five aggregates – in other words, *nāma* and *rūpa*. Meditators can't know details like name, father, mother, and so forth by insight knowledge, *vipassanāñāna*; for the most part, they can only discern ultimate truth, the five aggregates, or *nāma-rūpa*. They can partially see their physical form too.

As an example, I will tell you about the experience of one meditator who discerned her past lives. Why are we born as men? Why we are born as women? Why are we born as Myanmar people or Indonesian or Singaporean? Do you want to know the reason? Yes, this is very important; this is an issue that deep-

ly concerns our lives, very deeply. I will give an example of one woman's experience in meditation.

In our meditation centre in Myanmar, there was a lady who could successfully discern *nāma* and *rūpa*. After that she was instructed to discern the cause of suffering in her previous life. When she discerned her past life, she saw an image from her near-death moment. I will give an example so you can understand easily. Here are three fingers – the index finger, the middle finger, and the ring finger. The index finger represents the very beginning state in this very life, the middle finger represents the appearance of death consciousness, and the ring finger represents the near-death moment. Although we speak in terms of past life and present life, we see that these are in fact very close when we look at them from this point of view. Suppose you succeed in discerning your *nāma* and *rūpa* in your mother's womb; after that, you should direct your attention to the *nāma-rūpa* of your past life, which are very close to the *nāma-rūpa* of the present life. Then you will see the near-death moment, and there you need to see which object the mind took at that time.

So when that lady focused her attention on her past, the object or the image which appeared at the prior near-death moment was someone offering fruit to a *bhikkhu*. Is giving an offering a wholesome or an unwholesome action? Wholesome. So in this image of someone offering fruit to a *bhikkhu*, there could also be seen nearby an educated city lady. We let the meditator investigate to see who it was that made the offering. The one who offered fruit to a *bhikkhu* was an uneducated poor village lady. As you all

know, when someone who is poor sees someone who is rich, for sure the poor person wants to be rich too. So when she was offering fruit to the bhikkhu and saw an educated city lady nearby, she made an aspiration: ‘Because of this offering, may I be reborn as an educated city lady.’ She certainly did not do that wholesome action at her near-death moment; she had done it before, on some day during that past life. But at the near-death moment, the kamma of that past action proved so strong and powerful that it appeared as if she was doing it again.

So that you might understand easily, consider: When you sit in meditation, do you think about this and that? There are many mind-objects appearing while you meditate, right? These same objects can appear at the near-death moment. Do you often think of wholesome things or unwholesome things? Please be careful. For that reason the Buddha said, ‘Few are those who are reborn again in the human realms or celestial realms; many are those who are reborn in the woeful states’.⁵⁰ Because of the object that appeared at that woman’s near-death moment, in this very life she became an educated city lady.

We teach meditators to discern not just one past life, but two, three, four, even five past lives, so that they might be able to understand kamma and its results. Only after coming to know the cause of suffering will you understand, and only then will you agree with the Buddha, that good begets good, bad begets bad. You will have a deeper and direct understanding of

⁵⁰ SN.V.12.11.1-12 Pañcagatipeyyālavaggo (SN 56.102-113 The Five Destinations Repetition Series Chapter).

kamma and its causes. Then you can undertake vipassanā meditation.

So when you know and see the First Noble Truth, and when you know and see the Second Noble Truth, you are ready to start insight meditation. The objects of insight meditation are the First Noble Truth and the Second Noble Truth – in other words, ultimate mentality and materiality and their causes. These are the objects of insight meditation. Rūpa kalāpa rapidly arise and perish all the time – very, very quickly – and they are very, very small. As an example to enable all of you to understand: When you turn on a very old television, not a modern one, what do you see before the program starts? You see dots on the screen, right? Are they small or big? Small. But you can see them with the naked eye. If you divide these small dots a hundred times, a thousand times, you will have sub-atomic particles. By the light of concentration, you can know them, you can see them. So when you know, when you see the First Noble Truth and the Second Noble Truth, at that time you can start practising vipassanā and begin contemplating impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Because the kalāpas are arising and perishing all the time; that is why they are suffering. You can't control them. You can't tell them not to arise. After a kalāpa arises, it perishes. You can't tell it not to perish. So it is characterised by suffering. That is why it is suffering. It is arising and perishing; that is why it is impermanent. It is out of control, so it is non-self, *anatta*.

So when you see the arising and perishing of ultimate mentality, ultimate materiality, causes, and

their effects, if you contemplate impermanence many times, internally and externally, and if you contemplate suffering internally and externally, and if you contemplate non-self in the same way internally and externally, one day your insight knowledge will mature. If you continue to contemplate the general characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, then, by emphasising only the discernment of the perishing of the *saṅkhāra dhamma* (conditioned phenomena, i.e., *nāma* and *rūpa*, causes and effects), your vipassanā wisdom will mature, and Path Knowledge will arise. Path Knowledge arises taking Nibbāna as its object. Path Knowledge arises only once; then Fruition Knowledge arises, many times. Only then will you see the lokuttaradhamma. You see Nibbāna, the Third Noble Truth, the cessation of suffering. After that, if you continue to practise vipassanā, the second Path knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, the third Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge, and the fourth Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge will arise one after another, removing corresponding mental defilements without remainder.

In Nibbāna there is no arising or perishing of any conditioned dhamma. There is no trace of arising and perishing of conditioned dhammas. So there is peace – real peace. Do you want real happiness? There you can find it. After attaining Path Knowledge, you can enter Fruition Knowledge and enjoy it anytime you want. Even when you are sitting, you can experience Fruition Knowledge, taking Nibbāna as object. When you are walking, you can experience it. When you are lying down, you can experience it. In the car, possible. On the plane,

possible. Here, possible. In a boat, possible. Under a tree, also possible. In a cave, also possible. This is what you yourself have come to realise, the very same thing the Buddha penetrated. This is the Dhamma that the Buddha Himself penetrated. This is the Dhamma that the Buddha saw. This is the Dhamma the Buddha realised. At that time, you know the Dhamma which the Buddha penetrated. So you understand what the Buddha is. The Buddha was a great being of this sort, able to take Nibbāna as an object any time He wanted. Then you will be able to say, 'I am able to do the same thing the Buddha did.' Then you understand what the Dhamma is. At that time, you see the Buddha. After that, for you, a Buddha image is no longer important. An image doesn't represent the Buddha. An image is just an image. For those who haven't truly seen the Buddha, an image is necessary. But for those who have seen the Dhamma, the Buddha is everywhere.

In the *Milindapañha*⁵¹ it is asked, 'Is there a Buddha?' The Venerable Nāgasena answered, 'There is a Buddha.' The Buddha represents the Dhamma, so by means of the Dhamma, the Buddha can be known and seen, even in this very life.

May you all be able to see the Buddha in this very life through following the true teachings of the Bud-

⁵¹ Unique to the Burmese Khuddaka Nikāya, the *Milindapañha* recounts a profound and engaging discussion of the Dhamma between an Arahant bhikkhu named Nāgasena and Menander, the Graeco-Indian king of Bactria.

For Those Who Want to See the Buddha

dha, developing concentration, and practising step by step to realise the Four Noble Truths.

And may you all be able to realise the Dhamma in this very life.

May you all be able to see the Buddha wherever you are.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Aspirations and Sharing of Merits

We have accumulated a lot of wholesome kamma – through dāna, sīla, and bhāvanā. There is no result which compares with the realisation of Nibbāna. Therefore, all the good actions you have accumulated in this retreat should be for the realisation of Nibbāna. Other attainments and other achievements are not as important. You may not be able to make an end of suffering as you are making your way in search of the Dhamma, because your accumulated pāramī is not yet sufficient; but you will be reborn in a good realm if you make an aspiration to attain Nibbāna. Then you will have the intention to make an end of suffering in every existence, so that you will heedfully make an effort one life after another. Therefore, making an aspiration to make an end of suffering is the supreme aspiration of our lives. So now we will make aspirations and share merits:

*Idaṃ me puññaṃ āsavakkhayāvahaṃ hotu.
Idaṃ me puññaṃ nibbānassa pacayo hotu.
Mama puññabhāgaṃ sabbasattānaṃ bhājemī;
Te sabbe me samaṃ puññabhāgaṃ labhantu.*

May this merit of mine
lead to the destruction of the taints.
May this merit of mine
be a condition for the realisation of Nibbāna.
I share these merits of mine with all sentient beings.
May all sentient beings
receive an equal share of my merits.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Abbreviations

About the Footnote Citations

Footnotes cite the Pāli sources first, from the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka, followed by the most common citation format for the English translations.

Abbreviations for Sources Cited

- AN Aṅguttara Nikāya
 (Collection of Numerical Discourses)
- Dhp Dhammapada
 (The Verses of Dhamma)
- DN Dīgha Nikāya
 (Collection of Long Discourses)
- MN Majjhima Nikāya
 (Collection of Middle Length Discourses)
- SN Saṃyutta Nikāya
 (Collection of Connected Discourses)
- Vsm Visuddhimagga
 (The Path of Purification)

Index

- abandonment of
 others, 47, 49, 118
abhayadāna, 32
Abhayarājakumāra-
 suttaṃ, 44
Abhidhamma, 100,
 104, 164
absorption
 concentration, 7,
 18, 120, 152, 154,
 155, 158, 160, 169
acceptance, 38, 81,
 114, 118, 128, 130,
 136
access concentration,
 18, 154, 155, 160
action and reaction,
 46
Ādittasuttaṃ, 93, 123
ageing, 67
alobha, 15
āmisadāna, 32
Ānanda, 101
Anāthapiṇḍika, 115
anattā, 40, 42, 48, 50,
 85–89, 91–93, 124,
 125, 172
Anattalakkhaṇa-
 suttaṃ, 88
anger, 10, 34, 47, 49,
 79, 84, 86, 87, 92,
 93, 94, 114, 122,
 123, 126
anicca, 166, 172
Anupadasuttaṃ, 102,
 103
anusaya kilesa, 84–93,
 98, 126–28
applied thought, 102
appreciative joy, 51,
 119, 130, 135
Arahant, 24, 90, 101,
 126, 154, 174
arising and perishing,
 166, 172, 173
art, defined, 113
arūpa kalāpa, 165
arūpakammaṭṭhānam,
 159
aspiration, 3, 9, 12,
 74, 99, 171
aspirations, 177
atomic science, 166
atoms, 162–63
attachment, 14, 19,
 33, 76, 77, 79, 87,
 88, 91, 94, 158
attachment to wrong
 practices, 19, 94
attention, 102
attharasa, 25
automobile, analogy
 of, 72, 78

Index

- aversion, 84, 85
aversive temperament,
79
avoiding conflict, 47
ayoniso manasikāra,
90, 139
Bactria, 174
bad, determining what
is, 74
balance in life, 78, 99,
113, 131, 136
belief, 2
beneficial speech, 44
benefit of others, 45,
48, 52, 114, 123,
131, 134
bhavaṅga, 104
Bhayabheravasuttam,
4
birth, 5, 7, 148, 167,
170
blame, 38, 48, 114,
129, 130
blind faith, 2, 3, 4, 5,
9, 11
Bodhi Tree, 143
bodhisatta, 28, 100
as monkey, 40, 45
bodily actions, 59
body, 64
as master, 65
as the world, 60
fathom-long, 60
needs of, 65, 66
repulsiveness, 91,
145, 158
thirty-two parts, 157
brahmā realm, 5, 116,
171
brahmavihārā, 50, 130
Brahmin, 40
brain, 166
Buddha eye, 46, 132
Buddha image, 143,
174
Buddhaghosa, 102
business class, 156,
158, 160
calm mind, 76, 78, 81,
89, 90, 93, 99, 113,
123, 136, 156, 173
capability of others,
47, 133, 137
car, analogy of, 72, 78
cause and effect, 4, 9,
12, 40, 42, 43, 48,
50, 87, 91, 98, 134,
166, 168, 171, 172
celestial realms, 5, 31,
171
children, 47, 133
Cīñcamānavikā, 115
Cittasuttam, 59
cognitive processes,
167
colour, 165

Index

- commentaries, 25,
100, 104, 145, 154,
165
origin of, 101
companions, 130
compassion, 51, 130,
135
computer technology,
56
concentration, 7, 15,
57, 67, 71, 94, 138,
150, 154
light of, 156
training of, 18
two types of, 18,
155
concord, 113
conditioned dhamma,
173
conditions, right, 86
conflict, avoiding, 47
consciousness, 148
contact, 102
contentment, 68, 69
conventional reality,
165
cooking, 78
Councils, 101
craving, 34, 38, 47,
52, 64, 68, 76, 79,
84, 85, 87, 89, 91,
96, 121, 127, 139
creator, 4, 8, 98
dāna, 9, 11, 29–30,
49, 52, 99, 170
dāna (generosity), 177
dancing, 74
Daṇḍasuttam, 10, 63
decision, 102
defilement, 14, 20, 21,
34, 41, 42, 57, 58,
60, 64, 68, 82, 84,
94, 95, 139, 151,
173
as enemy
befriended, 119
as non-self, 85–89,
91–93
fire of, 123
latent, 84–93, 98,
126–28
definite prophecy, 28
delusion, 34, 52, 93,
94, 123, 126
desirable and
undesirable things,
38, 40, 49, 50, 53,
114, 121, 130, 134,
136
desire, 34, 38, 47, 52,
64, 68, 76, 79, 84,
85, 87, 89, 91, 96,
121, 127, 139
determination, 44–45,
48, 51, 53
deva realm, 5, 31,
116, 171

Index

- devas, king of the, 116
Dhamma, propagation
of, 105
Dhammacakkappavattanasuttam, 5, 148
dhammadāna, 32
dhammakāyo, 146
dhammaniḥhānakhanti,
40
Dhammapada, 57, 69,
115, 138
dhammarasa, 25
Dīpaṅkara Buddha, 28
direct knowledge, 21
discernment, 121,
131, 133
Discourse Concerning
Janavasabha, 9, 167
Discourse Concerning
Pahārāda, 154
Discourse Concerning
Prince Abhaya, 44
Discourse Concerning
Rohitassa, 60
Discourse Concerning
the Kālāmas, 3
Discourse Concerning
the Kesaputtīyā, 3
Discourse Concerning
Thirty Bhikkhus, 10
Discourse Concerning
Vakkali, 145
Discourse on Advice
to Rāhula, Great, 39
Discourse on Analysis,
152
Discourse on Being
Devoured, 168
Discourse on Burning,
93, 123
Discourse on
Concentration, 20,
150
Discourse on Fear and
Dread, 4
Discourse on Non-
Self, 88
Discourse on One by
One As They
Occurred, 102, 103
Discourse on One's
Own Mind, 61, 120
Discourse on Setting
in Motion the
Wheel of the
Dhamma, 5, 148
Discourse on the
Analysis of the
Truths, 152
Discourse on the
Destruction of
Craving, Great, 129
Discourse on the
Foundations of
Mindfulness, 152
Discourse on the
Frequent

Index

- Recollections of a
Renunciate, 50
- Discourse on the
Leash-Bound, 10,
63
- Discourse on the
Mind, 59
- Discourse on the
Rhinoceros Horn,
25
- Discourse on the
Stick, 10, 64
- disrepute, 130
- divine eye, 4
- doer, absence of, 42
- dogs, 31
- dosāggi*, 92, 123
- doubt, 3, 19, 94
- dukkha, 172
 - cessation of, 173
 - defined, 147, 156,
167
- ear-sensitivity, 103
- earth element, 161
- earth, simile of, 39
- economy class, 156,
158, 160
- education, 153, 171
- eight precepts, 13, 155
- electrons, 162
- endless journey, 96,
112, 124, 127
- energy, 36, 52, 102
 - engagement, needless,
70, 73, 78, 86, 92,
98
 - equanimity, 39, 48,
51, 102, 130, 134
 - essence of meaning
and idea, 25
 - expectation, 49, 53,
96
 - eye-sensitivity, 90, 103
 - faith, 20, 96, 150
 - blind faith, 2, 3, 4,
5, 9, 11
 - fame and disrepute,
130
 - fame and gain, 63
 - fathom-long body, 60
 - fear, 32, 34, 53
 - fearlessness, 32, 52
 - feeling, 102, 148
 - fetters, three, 94
 - finding fault with
others, 79–83
 - fire element, 161
 - Fire Sermon, 93, 123
 - fires of lust, anger, and
delusion, 92, 123
 - First Noble Truth, 7,
11, 147, 156, 167,
172
 - first training, 15, 20,
138
 - five aggregates, 5, 148,
156

Index

- Five Destinations
 Repetition Series
 Chapter, 171
five precepts, 13, 16,
 32, 36, 47, 77, 94,
 96, 105, 132, 138,
 155
five senses, 90–91,
 103
five types of
 sensitivity, 165
foolishness, 43
forbearance, 37, 128
forgiveness, 48, 82,
 128
forty meditation
 objects, 18, 155,
 159
four elements
 described, 161
four elements
 meditation, 159
Four Noble Truths, 5,
 15, 20, 43, 44, 94,
 147, 150, 154
 world as subject, 60
four requisites, 64, 89
four sublime abidings,
 50, 130
four woeful states, 4,
 73, 77, 94, 171
Fourth Noble Truth,
 147
frog, simile of, 154
fuel (of defilement),
 123, 128
Fully Enlightened
 One, 24
Gaddulabaddhasutta
 m, 10, 63
gain and fame, 63
Gandhi, 55
generosity, 29–30, 49,
 52, 170
genuine *mettā*, 47
gift of Dhamma, 32
gift of harmless-
 ness, 32
giving, 29–30, 49, 52,
 170
God, 8
good of others, 45, 48,
 52, 114, 123, 131,
 134
good, determining what
 is, 74
gradual training, 154
Great Discourse on
 Advice to Rāhula,
 39
Great Discourse on
 the Destruction of
 Craving, 129
great earth, simile of,
 39
greed, 15, 34, 52, 53,
 79, 84, 85, 87, 90,

Index

- 92, 94, 124, 126,
127
- greedy temperament,
79
- grudges, 41
- habits of the mind,
skill in, 59, 67, 70,
77, 78, 79, 83, 89,
99, 120, 128
- harming others, 45
- harmlessness, 52
- hearing, knowledge
through, 21
- heart, 103, 166
- heart-base materiality,
166
- heedlessness, 124
- holding grudges, 41
- honesty, 62, 80, 82
- humility, 27
- ignorance, 41, 64
- image Buddha, 143
- image of the Buddha,
174
- impartiality, 48
- impermanence, 166,
172
- impurity of the mind,
18
- Indonesia, 1, 169
- insight, 94, 95, 138,
154
training of, 19
- insight knowledge, 19,
169
- insight meditation,
156, 158, 160, 172
- insults, 48
- intention, 14, 106
- interference, 70, 73,
78, 86, 92, 98
- intoxication, 17, 32,
34, 36, 77
- involvement, needless,
70, 73, 78, 86, 92,
98
- Janavasabhasuttam, 9,
167
- jealousy, 79, 84, 119,
124, 126
- jhāna, 7, 18, 102, 139,
152, 155, 158, 169
factors, 160
- journey that has an
end, 112, 124, 136
- joy, 7
- judging others, 79–83
- Kālāma Sutta, 3
- Kālāmas, 11
- kalāpa*, 5, 149, 156,
162, 165, 166, 172
- kamma, 4, 9, 11, 20,
31, 50, 51, 66, 79,
86, 114, 117, 136,
171
as volition, 106

Index

- past and present,
118, 138
kappiya, 110
karuṇā, 51, 130, 135
kāya, 146
keeping promises, 43
Kesamuttisuttam, 3
Khaggavisāṇasuttam,
25
Khajjanīyasuttam, 168
Khuddaka Nikāya,
174
kilesa, 14, 20, 21, 34,
41, 42, 58, 64, 68,
82, 84, 94, 95, 139,
151, 173
anusaya kilesa, 84–
93, 98, 126–28
as enemy
befriended, 119
as non-self, 85–89,
91–93
fire of, 123
latent, 84–93, 98,
126–28
killing, 16, 32, 34, 36,
45, 77, 105, 139
king of the devas, 116
King Pasenadi, 116
knowledge through
hearing, 21
Kosala, 115
laity, 155
latent defilement, 84–
93, 98, 126–28
law of kamma, 4, 9,
20, 50, 130, 137,
168, 171
lies, 32
life faculty, 165
light of concentration,
156, 161, 163, 165,
172
likes and dislikes, 75,
95
living things, 33, 35
lobha, 15, 34, 52, 53,
79, 84, 85, 87, 90,
92, 94, 124, 126,
127, 133
lokuttaradhamma, 146,
173
loss, 53
love of oneself
(wholesome), 83
loving-kindness, 45–
48, 49, 50, 52, 130
genuine, 47, 131–34
Lumbinī, 143
lust, 34, 92, 123
lying, 16, 32, 36, 52,
77
Magadha, 102
magga-ñāṇa, 146
Mahākassapa, 101
Mahārāhulovāda-
suttam, 39

Index

- Mahāsatipatṭhāna-suttaṃ, 152
Mahātaṇhāsankhaya-suttaṃ, 129
Mahinda, 101
main cause, 118, 138
Majjhima Nikāya, 102
mango, analogy of, 85, 125
marriage, 158
material aggregate, 148
material gift, 32
materiality meditation, 159, 160
meaning and idea, essence of, 25
meditation, 7, 13, 45, 57, 71, 143
two types, 159
meditation object, 57, 172
forty different, 18, 155, 159
Menander, 174
mental actions, 59
mental formations, 102
mental impurity, 18
mentality, 103, 166
mentality and materiality, 5, 6, 8, 99, 147, 148, 156
beginning of, 167
mentality meditation, 159, 160
mentality, ultimate, 102, 104
mettā, 45–48, 49, 50, 52, 130
genuine, 47, 131–34
Middle Length Discourses, 102
Middle Way, 144
Milindapañha, 174
mind moments, 167
mind, unification of, 102
mind-door, 103
mindfulness, 38, 51, 54, 57, 58, 67, 71–79, 89, 92, 98, 102, 106, 118, 128, 130
modern physics, 162–63, 166
mohāggi, 92, 123
money, 68, 89, 153
monkey, 40, 45
morality, 15, 20, 30–32, 36, 52, 77, 94, 96, 105, 110, 138, 154, 177
purpose of, 16
mosquito, 45
muditā, 51, 119, 130, 135
mundane knowledge, 153

Index

- Myanmar, 108, 117,
169
Nāgasena, 174
nāma, 5, 103, 148
nāma kalāpa, 165
nāmakammaṭṭhānaṃ,
159
natural law of
Dhamma, 40, 46,
48, 50
near-death moment,
8, 10, 77, 170, 171
negative thinking, 86
nekkhamma, 13, 14,
33–35, 52
Nepal, 143
neutrons, 162
Nibbāna, 12, 15, 23,
37, 49, 54, 99, 138,
146, 150, 159, 173,
177
Nikāyas, 101, 152,
164
nine-fold
supramundane
Dhamma, 146, 173
Noble Eightfold Path,
15, 20, 138, 150,
152
Noble One, 96
non-greed, 15
non-living things, 33,
35
non-self, 40, 42, 48,
50, 85–89, 91–93,
124, 125, 172
objects of meditation,
forty, 18
ocean, simile of, 154
offering, 9, 11, 29–30,
49, 52, 99, 170
Omniscience of the
Buddha, 100
Omniscient Buddha,
24, 114, 163
Omniscient
Knowledge, 101,
114, 137, 147
ordination, 33, 35,
155
Pa-Auk Sayadaw, 108
Pabbajitābhīṇhasutta
ṃ, 50
*Pacceka*buddha, 24
Pahārādasuttam, 154
Pāḷi language, 102
Pañcagatipeyyāla-
vaggo, 171
pañcupādānak-
khandhā, 147
paññā, 7, 149
pāramī, 3, 14, 94, 99,
100, 116, 132
reason for sequence,
29, 36, 37, 43,
45, 51
ten, 28, 52–54

Index

- parents, 47, 133
participation,
 needless, 70, 73, 78,
 86, 92, 98
Pasenadi, King, 116
passion, 34
past lives, 8, 9, 20,
 116, 117, 167, 170,
 171
Path and Fruition, 7,
 19, 47, 88, 94, 95,
 96, 132, 139, 146,
 173
Path Knowledge, 146,
 173
Path of Purification, 6
patience, 37, 53
 as the way to
 Nibbāna, 37
Paṭṭhāna, 164
peace of mind, 76, 78,
 81, 89, 90, 93, 99,
 113, 123, 136, 156,
 173
perception, 102, 148
 of being, 161
perfections, 3, 14, 94,
 99, 100, 116, 132
 reason for sequence,
 29, 36, 37, 43,
 45, 51
 ten, 28, 52–54
Perfectly Enlightened
 One, 24
perseverance, 48, 51
personality view, 92,
 93, 94, 96, 124, 125
phala-ñāna, 146
physics, 162–63, 166
piano, 74
pīti, 7, 149
pleasure, 102
potentiality, 86, 126
pottery, 107
praise and blame, 130
prayer, 2
precepts, 13, 155
pride, 27, 35, 38, 79,
 82, 84, 87, 124, 126
Prince Siddhattha,
 143
Private Buddha, 24
process-freed mind
 moments, 103
promises, keeping, 43
propagation of the
 Dhamma, 105
protons, 162
pubbenivāsānussati,
 168
puggala, 151
purification, 18, 20
purification of mind,
 139
quantum mechanics,
 162–63, 166
raggāgi, 92, 123
Rāhula, 39

Index

- rapture, 102
rebirth, 4, 8, 20, 31,
66, 73, 77, 112,
116, 117, 124, 158,
167, 170, 171
recollection of past
lives, 168
religion, defined, 2
renunciation, 13, 14,
33–35, 52
repulsiveness of the
body, 91, 145, 158
resentment, 41, 48, 88
respect, 62
retaliation, 42
retreat, 153
retribution, 42
Right Concentration,
154, 155
right conditions, 86
Right Speech, 44, 49,
52–54
right time and place,
51, 53
right time and place to
speak, 44, 49
Right View, 5
Rohitassasuttam, 60
round of rebirths, 4,
12, 13, 20, 31, 59,
77, 89, 112, 117,
124, 158, 167, 170,
171
unknowable
beginning of, 10,
63, 69
rūpa, 5, 148, 163
rūpa kalāpa, 162, 163,
165, 172
rūpakammaṭṭhānam,
159
rūpa-khandha, 148
Saccavibhaṅgasuttam,
152
Sacittasuttam, 61, 120
sakkāya-dīṭṭhi, 92, 93,
94, 96, 124, 125
Samādhisuttam, 20,
150
samatha, 18, 155, 159
samathayānika, 156
Sammāsambuddha, 24
saṃsāra, 4, 12, 13, 20,
31, 59, 77, 89, 112,
117, 124, 158, 167,
170, 171
unknowable
beginning of, 10,
63, 69
Saṅgha, 20, 96
Saṅgha Councils, 101
saṅkhāra dhamma, 173
saññā, 161
Sāriputta, 101
sāti, 38, 51, 54, 57,
58, 67, 71–79, 89,

Index

- 92, 98, 102, 106,
118, 128, 130
sattasaññā, 161
Sāvatti, 144
science, 162–63, 166
Second Noble Truth,
8, 11, 147, 167, 172
second training, 18,
20, 21, 139, 158
Self-Enlightened One,
24
self-identity view, 19,
92, 93, 94, 96
self-respect, 62
sense contact, 86
sensitivity, five types,
165
sensual pleasures, 33
sensuality, 57, 68, 89,
99
 endlessness of, 63
sex decade *kalāpa*, 6,
149
sexual misconduct,
16, 32, 34, 36, 77
Siddhattha, 143
sīla, 110
sīla (morality), 177
sīla, samādhi, paññā,
15
sīlabbata-parāmāsa, 19
simile of the frog, 154
simile of the great
 earth, 39
 simile of the ocean,
 154
Singapore, 55, 100,
169
singing, 74, 77
skill in the habits of
 the mind, 59, 67,
 70, 77, 78, 79, 83,
 89, 99, 120, 128
sleep, 79
smell, sense of, 165
Solitary Buddha, 24
Sotāpannā, 20, 94,
125
South Korea, 115
speech, 29, 52–54
 right time and place,
 44, 49
 unbeneficial, 44
Sri Lanka, 101
stealing, 16, 32, 34,
36, 77
stinginess, 79, 124,
126
Stream-Enterer, 20,
94, 125
strong points (of
 character), 79–81,
82, 87, 122, 128
sub-atomic particles,
162, 166
sublime abidings, 50,
130

Index

- success, 63, 66, 96,
118, 136, 137, 138,
171
- suddhavipassanā-*
yānika, 156
- suffering, 172
cessation of, 173
defined, 147, 156,
167
- Sumedha, 28
- supernatural power,
46, 120, 132, 168
- supporting cause, 66,
118, 138
- supramundane
Dhamma, 25, 146,
173
- sustained thought, 102
- Suttanta, 100, 164
- taking refuge, 46
- tanhā*, 34, 38, 47, 52,
64, 68, 76, 79, 84,
85, 87, 89, 91, 96,
121, 127, 139
- taste, 165
- Tathāgata, 146
- teaching, how
possible, 26
- technology, 56
- television, 172
- temperament, 79, 87
- ten *pāramī*, 28, 52–54
- ten perfections, 28,
52–54
- ten precepts, 13, 155
- Third Noble Truth,
147, 173
- third training, 19, 139,
160
- thirty-two parts of the
body, 157
- three characteristics,
172
- three fetters, 94
- Three Refuges, 20,
46, 74, 78, 96, 132
- three trainings, 15, 21,
94, 95, 97, 121,
138, 154
- three types of actions,
16, 59, 79, 81, 117,
121, 138
- three types of gift, 32
tilakkhana, 172
- time and place, 51, 53
- time and place to
speak, 44, 49
- Timśamattasuttam, 10
- Tipiṭaka, 100
- Tiratana*, 46, 74, 78,
96, 132
- Tisarāṇa*, 46, 74, 78,
96, 132
- trained mind, 60
- training of
concentration, 20,
21, 155, 158
- training of insight, 155

Index

- training of morality, 155
- Triple Gem, 20, 46, 74, 78, 96, 132
- true teaching of the Buddha, 95, 100–105
- truthfulness, 43–44, 52
- twelve unwholesome kammic results, the Buddha’s, 115
- two types of concentration, 155
- two types of meditation, 159
- ultimate materiality, 5, 156, 161, 165, 173
- ultimate mentality, 102, 104, 173
- ultimate mentality and materiality, 8, 150, 167, 168, 172
- ultimate truth, 165
- unbeneficial speech, 44
- unification of mind, 102
- unwholesome, determining what is, 74
- unwise attention, 90, 139
- upekkhā*, 39, 48, 51, 130, 134
- Vakkali, 144
- Vakkalisuttam, 145
- vegetarianism, 4, 10
- verbal actions, 59
- Vibhaṅgasuttam, 152
- video, analogy of, 18
- Vinaya, 100, 110, 155
- violence, 128
- vipassanā, 156, 158, 160, 168, 172
- vipassanāñāna*, 169
- virīya*, 36
- Visākhā, 115
- Visuddhimagga, 6
- vīthi*, *vīthi mutta*, 103
- voidness, 40, 42, 48, 50
- volition, 106
- volitional formations, 87, 102, 148
- water element, 161
- weak points (of character), 79–81, 82, 87, 122, 128
- wealth, 66, 118, 136, 138, 171
- welfare of others, 45, 48, 52, 114, 123, 131, 134
- wholesome, determining what is, 74
- wind element, 161

Index

- wisdom, 7, 9, 11, 15,
35, 42, 52, 53, 58,
75, 82, 94, 120,
138, 139, 149, 154
- wise attention, 67, 73,
78, 88, 90, 92, 98,
139
- woeful realms, 4, 73,
77, 94, 171
- world
 - as subject of the
Four Noble
Truths, 60
 - as the body, 60
- worldly dhammas, 130
- worry, 35
- worship, 2
- wrong practices,
 - attachment to, 94
- wrong view, 94, 124
- X-rays, 157
- yoniso manasikāra*, 67,
73, 78, 88, 90, 92,
98, 106, 139
- zeal, 102

Buddhavandanā

Paying Respect to The Buddha

*Buddho Bodhāya deseti, danto yo damathāya ca;
Samathāya santo dhammam, tinno'va taraṇaya ca;
Nibbuto nibbānatthāya, taṃ lokasaraṇam name*

The Buddha, the Enlightened One, the refuge of the three worlds, the arahant (Nāga), having known the Four Noble Truths by Himself and wishing to enlighten others that deserve to be enlightened like Himself; having tamed Himself with respect to the six faculties, and wishing to tame others that are fit to be tamed like Himself; having attained peace Himself, and wishing others that are worthy might attain peace like Himself; having crossed over to the other side of the ocean of saṃsāra, and wishing others that are worthy might cross over to the other shore like Himself; having extinguished the fire of defilement at the four stages, and wishing others that are worthy might extinguish the fire of defilement like Himself; out of compassion, he expounded the glorious Dhamma to devas and humans for forty-five years. To Him, The Buddha, the Nāga, the refuge of the three worlds, I pay homage physically, verbally and mentally in all humility with joined palms raised.

May the Noble Wishes of all beings be fulfilled.

May all be well and happy.

*Hitvā kāme pabbajjimsu
Santo gambhiracintakā
Te tumēpya anusikkhāvo
Pabbajitā supesalā*

Good people in the ancient days in both the present and past world cycles, destined to be omniscient Buddhas, private Buddhas, and Noble Ones, had reflected deeply on the true nature of life and unhesitatingly gave up all their living and non-living possessions, which are objects of sensual craving for the vast majority of people and are prone to various harms and dangers. Seeing the inherent faults in those possessions, they chose to renounce the world and to live ordained lives in seclusion in order to undertake the training and practice of morality, concentration, and insight meditation, diligently and ardently.

May good people of the present days who have come into existence and are imbued with the perfection of renunciation, emulate the great people of those ancient days and unhesitatingly renounce the world with hearts founded upon moral purity. May these good people live ordained lives in seclusion and be able to undertake the training and practice of morality, concentration, and insight meditation, diligently and ardently.

May all know and see the Dhamma in this very life.

May all be free from suffering.

About Bhikkhu Revata

Bhikkhu Revata was born in 1971 in Mawlamyine, Myanmar. He received his bachelor's degree from Yangon University in 1994 and independently taught computer technology for five years. He was ordained as a Theravāda bhikkhu at Pa-Auk Tawya in 1999, with the Most Venerable U Āciṇṇa, the Pa-Auk Sayadaw, as his preceptor. He has studied the Pāli scriptures and commentaries and speaks Burmese, English, and Thai.

After practising meditation under the guidance of the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw, Sayadaw U Cittara, and Sayadaw U Sila, in 2002 he began teaching meditation to local and foreign yogis, both ordained and lay, and is currently an assistant teacher of the Pa-Auk Sayadaw. He is responsible for teaching local and foreign yogis and for training successful practitioners to teach meditation themselves.

A distinguished meditator and teacher, he has taught extensively both in Myanmar and abroad. He has conducted meditation retreats in China, Indonesia, South Korea, Latvia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

He has written four books in his native language, three of them in collaboration with the Most Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw. Like the present work, other collections of Bhante's teachings and Dhamma talks have been printed in English under the titles of *Awaken, O World!* (2006), *The Disciple Within* (2008), and *Bearers of the Burden* (2011). His talks have been translated into Korean, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

Other teachings from Bhikkhu Revata in e-book, audio, and video formats can be found on the Internet at www.revata-bhikkhu.org